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BRITISH DEFENSE POLICY 1966:
A TRADITIONAL OR A NEW APPROACH

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BRITISH DEFENSE POLICY 1966: A TRADITIONAL
OR A NEW APPROACH?

by

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CHAPTER I

THE 1966 DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

Above all the Government can, and must, decide in broad terms what sort of role Britain should play in the world in ten years time, and what part its military forces should play in supporting that role. In short, it has to decide what sort of military capability is likely to make political sense.¹

Thus, the Labor Government asked some basic questions concerning Britain's world role in its 1966 Defense White Paper. The White Paper was the result of an extensive review of Britain's resources and commitments, and it set forth a defense program for the 1970's. It attempted to define the role which Britain would play on the world scene in the 1970's, and it outlined the kind of military establishment which would support this role.

The making of such an evaluation of role and capability would be a major undertaking for any nation. It was perhaps an even greater step for the Government of the United Kingdom to take because of the position occupied by

¹"Statement on the Defence Estimates 1966, Part I. The Defence Review," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 2901 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 4. Hereinafter cited as Cmnd. 2901. It will be noted that British spellings are used throughout this thesis in matter directly quoted from British sources and in the titles of those sources. Additionally, it should be noted that Parliamentary Command Papers are cited in the first instance by long title, but thereafter by short title--Cmnd. or Cmd., as appropriate.



Britain and its military forces over the last two centuries. The 1966 White Paper asked, in effect, whether a nation which for centuries had been either the most powerful, or among the most powerful, in the world was willing to accept a second-class status. It is not unnatural that such a question should generate a heated and sometimes violent discussion in the country's policy-making establishment. The voice of this establishment, The Times, headlined its article on the debate over the White Paper as follows: "Defence Debate Ends in Uproar."² The article under this headline provides considerable evidence to support it:

Pandemonium swept over the Commons in a surge of partisan emotion during the closing minutes before the final division of the present Parliament last night. Mr. Healey, the Secretary of State for Defence, stood at the dispatch box for minutes on end shouting into a wall of Opposition noise that left him completely inaudible. Mr. Heath, the Opposition leader, set an example to his rank and file by leaning forward angrily in his seat to shout challenges to the Treasury bench that were no more audible.³

The Defense White Paper caused concern and discussion not only in Great Britain, but in the United States as well. U. S. policy makers were naturally interested in the future defense plans of one of our most valuable allies, especially since British policy East of Suez is considerably

²The Times [late London air edition], March 9, 1966, p. 10, cols. 1-2.

³Ibid.



involved with our own policy in South East Asia. The White Paper provides the outline for British defense policy for the next decade, and it merits study from both the British and U. S. points of view.

The White Paper purports to set forth Britain's defense policy; this thesis will examine that policy in an attempt to discover whether it is representative of traditional British defense policy or whether it signals a new approach for the British in defense planning. Such an examination requires first a look at the White Paper itself, and this chapter will be devoted to this task. Chapters II and III will review British defense policy from 1919 until the present in order to discover the traditional elements of that policy. The final chapter will evaluate the policy set forth in the White Paper in the light of traditional British policy in an attempt to isolate the traditional from the new, and conclusions will be offered concerning the real nature of the current policy.

I. THE MAJOR PREMISE

When the Wilson Government took office in October, 1964, a decision was made to conduct a thorough review of Britain's defense needs for the decade of the 1970's. This review had two main purposes: "to relax the strain imposed on the British economy by the defence programme which it



[the Government] had inherited,"⁴ and to shape the country's defense posture for the 1970's.⁵ The 1966 White Paper on defense is the result of the extensive review conducted by the Government. The major premise on which the review was based was that British defense spending would be brought to a stable level of about 6 per cent of the Gross National Product by 1969-1970. In effect, the review had to answer the question as to what sort of a role could be played and what sort of a military establishment could be had at that particular price.

A ceiling on defense spending had been forecast by the National Plan which had been published during the first year of the Wilson Administration. The National Plan was based on the fact that "Britain has one overriding economic necessity. We must pay our way in the world and to do this we must increase our production."⁶ In order for Britain to pay its own way, the Government committed itself to spend only what the national economy could afford,⁷ and reduction of military spending overseas was listed as one area where a saving would be brought about.⁸ The defense budget in

⁴ Cmnd. 2901, p. 1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Department of Economic Affairs and the Central Office of Information, Working for Prosperity, The National Plan in Brief (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965), p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸ Ibid., p. 9.



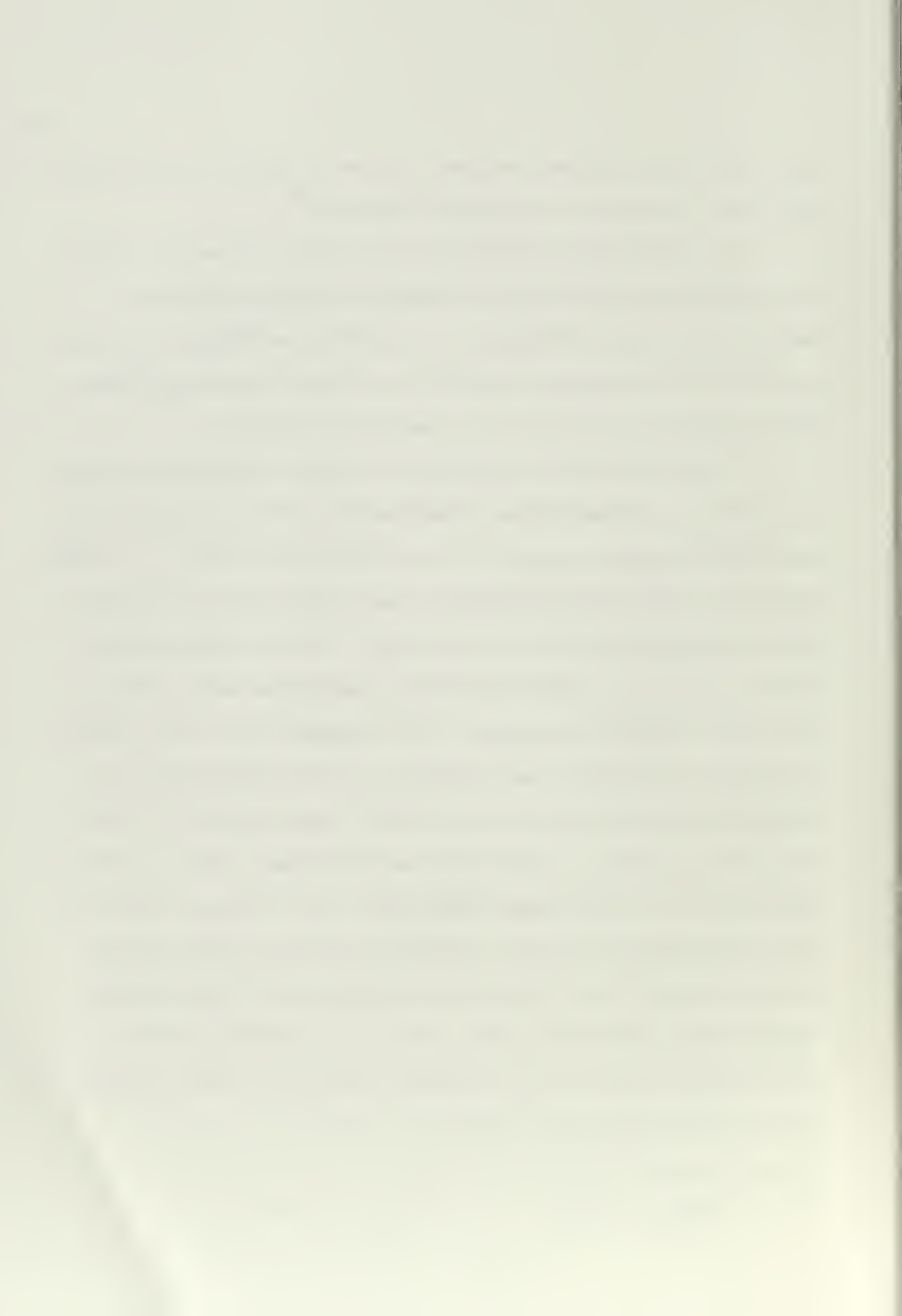
1969-1970 was forecast at two billion pounds or at about 6 per cent of the Gross National Product.⁹

It should be recognized, then, at the outset, that the new defense plan was not based on price estimates derived from the costing out of certain missions. Indeed, missions were developed based on a finite monetary figure which would be available for defense spending.

It follows from the major premise--a fixed ceiling on defense spending--that commitments must be adjusted to meet requirements set by the ceiling on spending. In addition, the White Paper honestly faces up to the fact that, even at current levels of spending, the country's armed forces are being asked to perform tasks for which they do not have adequate resources. For example, the sea; harbor ratio for destroyers and frigates in the Royal Navy decreased from one day at sea to four days in port in 1956-1957, to one day at sea to one and one-half days in port in 1963-1964. For the same type ships, the average number of days of twenty-four-hour steaming increased from almost eighty to over one hundred forty during the same period. In the Royal Air Force, the number of emergency moves of operational formation to overseas theaters almost tripled between 1963 and 1965--from 58 to 157.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰ Cmnd. 2901, p. 2.



Figures such as these clearly indicate that Britain's armed forces are being asked to perform tasks for which resources are inadequate. This fact, along with the ceiling on defense spending, requires further reduction in the role of the defense establishment. The Government declared its intention in the White Paper to reduce political commitments as required to remain within its financial target and to relax the overextension of forces which had resulted in recruiting and re-enlistment declines and overly-long family separations.¹¹

The White Paper puts the question to be answered by the review as follows: ". . . what sort of military capability makes political sense?"¹² The question might be put another way: what kind of military establishment is possible at a fixed price?

The Conservative Opposition was quick to attack the major premise on which the defense review was based. The Defense White Paper was released on February 22, 1966, and the Secretary of State for Defense, Mr. Denis Healey, made a brief statement concerning it in the House of Commons. His statement was repeated for the benefit of the House of Lords by the Minister of Defense for the Royal Air Force,

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Cmnd. 2901, p. 4.



Lord Shackleton.¹³ The Conservatives immediately attacked the fact that the defense review set out plans for a defense policy which was based on the Labor Government's "absurd preoccupation with fudging a figure of £ 2,000 million in 1969-70 regardless of the consequences for the morale of the Services or the defence of the Country."¹⁴ In the House of Lords, Lord Carrington, a sometime First Lord of the Admiralty under the Macmillan Government, answered for the Conservatives:

It is a very grave Statement which, in my view, will call into question, and does call into question, the whole of Britain's position throughout the world

First, those of us who sit on this side of the House think it quite wrong to tackle the admittedly costly and difficult problems of Defence by setting a financial target without regard to commitments. It may be politically popular, but it is thoroughly irresponsible.¹⁵

The White Paper, after stating its major premise of a two billion pound yearly spending ceiling, sets out Britain's military role. There are three major issues raised by the White Paper which will be dealt with as

¹³ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Weekly Hansard, No. 682, Cols. 239-241; Parliamentary Debates, Lords, Weekly Hansard, No. 615, Cols. 112-115.

¹⁴ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Weekly Hansard, No. 682, Col. 242. Mr. Enoch Powell, the shadow Defense Minister, in reply for the Opposition.

¹⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Lords, Weekly Hansard, No. 615, Col. 115.



separate items in this thesis: the Royal Navy, overseas deployment of British forces and the independent nature of British defense policy. Before proceeding to these major topics, however, a few observations on some less important aspects of the White Paper would not be inappropriate.

As with many British policy statements on foreign policy and defense policy, the United Nations and disarmament provide an introductory section.

Recent history underlines the importance to Britain, as to all other countries of strengthening the United Nations as the main instrument for keeping peace Most great Powers now realize that their own security can only be safe-guarded in the long run by halting the international arms race.¹⁶

This having been said, the White Paper concludes that the United Nations is an imperfect peace-keeper and that the arms race has not yet been halted.¹⁷ Therefore,

¹⁶ Cmnd. 2901, p. 4. The 1935 White Paper on Defense contained a similar introduction. The first aim of British foreign policy was proclaimed to be the establishment of peace and the means to be employed included support of the League of Nations and reduction and limitations of international armaments. See "White Paper of Defense Issued in Connection with the House of Commons Debate on March 11, 1935," as found in "Security and Defense," International Conciliation, No. 310, May, 1935, pp. 39-41. It is one of the purposes of this thesis to draw conclusions concerning the differences, if any, between British defense policy in 1966 and 1935. Such conclusion will appear in a later chapter; however, whether or not policy has changed, it is fairly clear that the drafters of the current White Paper have not significantly changed the introductory format which was employed in 1935.

¹⁷ Cmnd. 2901, p. 5.



Britain must have a defense policy which goes beyond support of the United Nations and arms control.

II. THE ROYAL NAVY

Much of the publicity which surrounded the publication of the White Paper was devoted to the Royal Navy. Prior to its publication, it was obvious to all observers of British political life that the White Paper would have something to say about the future of aircraft carriers in the Navy, and the issue of The Economist which came out the week before the White Paper was made public concluded that carriers were out.

But the Navy must swallow the essential point, which is that most of the tasks to be performed by air power can be done better from land bases than from floating (and sinkable) symbols of senior-service prestige.¹⁸

The Minister of Defense for the Royal Navy, Mr. Christopher Mayhew, was going to resign, so it was rumored, because of the Government's determination to phase out carriers. However, there was hope expressed in some quarters that resignations could be avoided.

The Government has decided in favor of more aircraft rather than more aircraft carriers--a limit fixed only by the financial ceiling which ministers have felt forced to set on defence costs--and members of

¹⁸"Healey at Arms," The Economist, 218:682, February 19, 1966.



the Cabinet were keeping their fingers crossed . . . in the hope that neither Mr. Christopher Mayhew, Minister of Defence for the Navy, nor any member of the Navy Board, would resign as a result of this decision. The more stolid members of the Cabinet gave their personal view that nobody would resign.¹⁹

The day before the White Paper was to be made public, The Times was able to publish Mr. Mayhew's letter of resignation, and the more stolid members of the Cabinet were proved wrong. It was a "Dear Harold" letter, under date of February 17, 1966, but it went further than was expected.

. . . I find myself unable to endorse the fundamental political and strategic assumptions of our policy which have been publicly indicated by Government spokesmen as forming the basis of the review.²⁰

The Navy Minister was not resigning simply because of the phase out of carrier aviation but because of disagreement about the "fundamental political and strategic assumptions on which the Government's policy was based."

The White Paper declared that the Navy of the 1970's will exploit the "most modern technologies, particularly in nuclear propulsion and guided missiles."²¹ The Polaris submarines, with their operational readiness target date set in 1969-1970, are scheduled to take over from the Royal Air

¹⁹ Manchester Guardian Weekly [special air edition], February 17, 1966, p. 3, col. 1.

²⁰ The Times [late London air edition], February 21, 1966, p. 7, col. 5.

²¹ Cmnd. 2901, p. 9.



Force responsibility for Britain's contribution of nuclear forces to NATO. The submarine force of the 1970's will have, said the White Paper, nuclear powered hunter-killer submarines also. Thus, the submarine force of the 1970's will have both nuclear and conventional powered boats; the nuclear force will have both Polaris and hunter-killer capabilities.

The surface Navy of the 1970's also received attention in the White Paper.²² The conversion of Tiger class cruisers is scheduled to continue in order to increase their anti-submarine capabilities. However, use of cruisers for this purpose is a temporary measure since the White Paper announced the prospective addition to the fleet of a new class of guided missile ship--the Type 82 destroyer-- which will have both surface-to-air missiles and an ASW capability. The White Paper announced no significant change in amphibious warfare ships and, by inference, the commando carriers are to remain in commission.

In terms of its surface and submarine forces, the Royal Navy did not fair badly in the White Paper. Nuclear submarines and a new class of guided-missile all-purpose surface ships certainly would tend to keep the Royal Navy in the front ranks of the world's naval powers. However,

²²Ibid.



the White Paper dealt a serious blow to Navy prestige with its decision on carriers. "The present carrier force will continue well into the 1970's; but we shall not build a new carrier (CVA 01)."²³ The end of aviation in the Royal Navy--the Navy which led the world in development of the techniques of carrier take-off and landing--was explained in frank budgetary terms. "We also believe that the tasks for which carrier-borne aircraft might be required in the later 1970's can be more cheaply performed in other ways."²⁴

In his brief opening statement in the House of Commons on the defense review, the Secretary of State for Defense, Mr. Healey, explained the decision to abandon carrier aviation in this way:

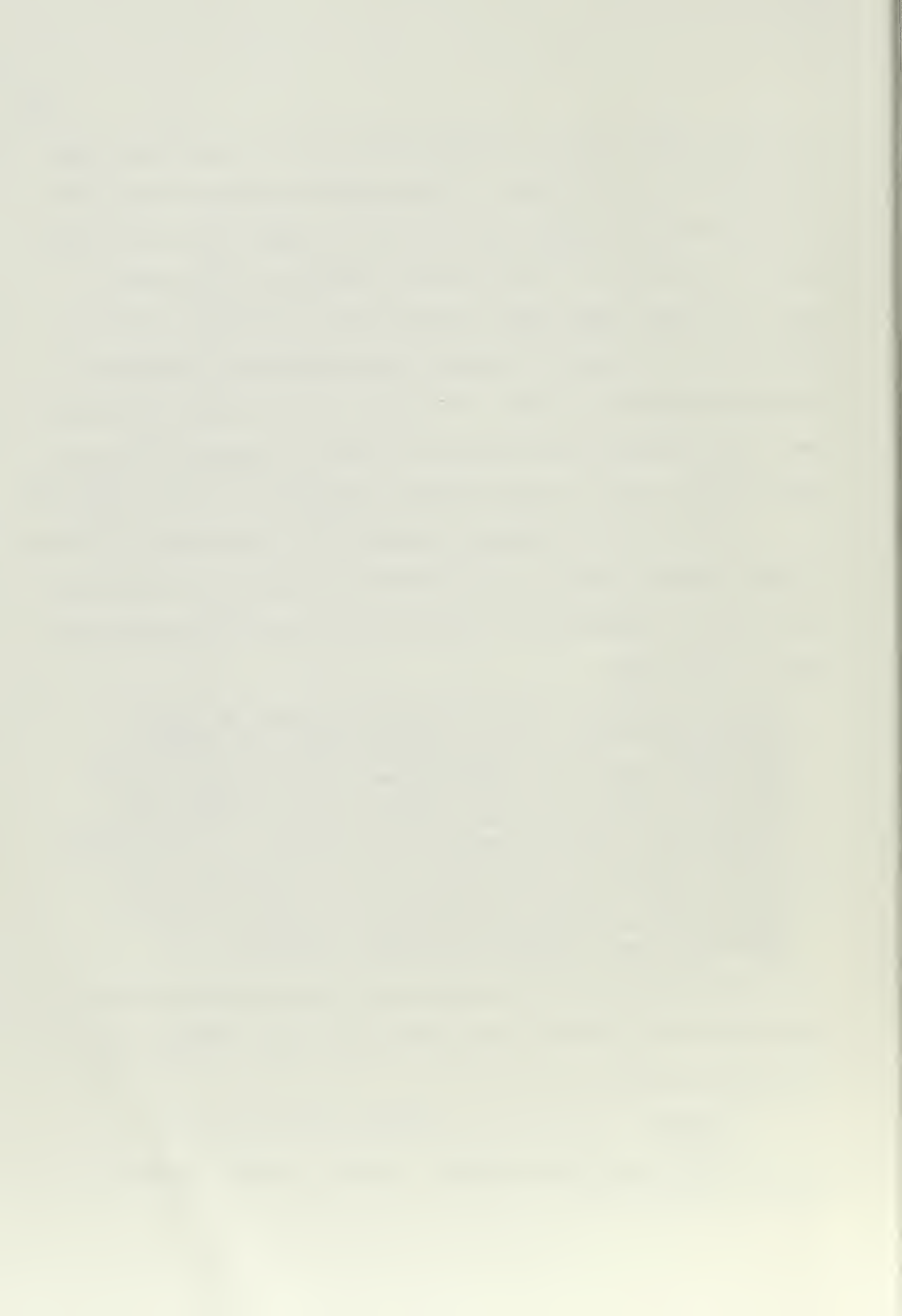
We shall keep our existing carrier force as long as possible into the 1970's, but we shall not order a new carrier. In the light of the military tasks we envisage, and of the operational return we can expect from its cost of £ 1,400 million over the next ten years, we do not believe that we should be justified in keeping a carrier force indefinitely. A new carrier could not become operational until 1973, when the rest of our carriers would be in the last phase of their active life. By the mid-1970's we should be able to reprovide the necessary elements of the carriers' capability more cheaply by other means.²⁵

The decision not to build the new carrier brought about the resignation of the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Cmnd. 2901, p. 10.

²⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Weekly Hansard, No. 682, Col. 241.



David Luce.²⁶ Unlike Mr. Mayhew, the civilian head of the Navy, the uniformed chief could not publicly explain the exact reasons for his resignation. It has been suggested, however, that Sir David resigned not so much because of the cancellation of the carrier, but because of the fact that without carriers effective military presence East of Suez could not be maintained.²⁷

III. OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT

The White Paper justified the decision not to build a new carrier on the fact that during the 1970's the deployment of British forces will be such as to obviate the necessity for carriers.

Experience and study have shown that only one type of operation exists for which carriers and carrier-borne aircraft would be indispensable: that is the landing, or withdrawal, of troops against sophisticated opposition outside the range of land based air cover.²⁸

The White Paper announced a plan under which land-based aircraft would perform on a reduced scale the strike/reconnaissance and air defense functions which are presently assigned to carrier aviation.²⁹ The extent of reduction is seen when

²⁶The New York Times [late city edition], February 23, 1966, p. 1, col. 6.

²⁷Newsweek, March 7, 1966, p. 50.

²⁸Cmnd., 2901, p. 10.

²⁹Ibid.



one considers the land bases outside the United Kingdom which will be available in the 1970's.

Britain's military presence outside Europe is declared by the White Paper to be a function of the protection of economic interests, the honoring of obligations and an interest in seeing peace maintained.³⁰ However, the maintenance of this presence is made the subject of important limitations:

First Britain will not undertake major operations of war except in cooperation with allies.

Secondly, we will not accept an obligation to provide another country with military assistance unless it is prepared to provide us with the facilities we need to make such assistance effective in time.

Finally, there will be no attempt to maintain defense facilities in an independent country against its wishes.³¹

The deployment of British forces in the Mediterranean will be reduced immediately. Gibraltar will be maintained at present force levels,³² but there will be reductions in Cyprus and Malta.³³ In effect, the Government of Malta is told in the White Paper that they will have to assume a larger part of their own defense burden. This is a refrain which appears throughout the White Paper: the one-time colonial power is telling its one-time colony that the new

³⁰ Cmnd. 2901, p. 6.

³¹ Cmnd. 2901, p. 7.

³² Cmnd. 2901, p. 8.

³³ Cmnd. 2901, p. 7. .



nation must assume the financial burden of nationhood and pay for its own defense.

In the Middle East and Far East--the area East of Suez--a reduction is also scheduled. In 1968, forces will be withdrawn from Aden, and there will be a slight increase in the forces stationed in the Persian Gulf as compensation.³⁴ This prospective withdrawal of forces from Aden at the time the South Arabian Federation achieves independence brought an accusation of breach of agreement from the Conservatives.³⁵ The Government's answer again adopted the theme--assume the burden of nationhood. The agreements in question were made with the semi-independent states which will form the federation. Those agreements will lapse, in the Government's view, when a new independent State comes into being.

There is no question here of "ratting" on our commitments. A country which wishes to become independent cannot assert the conditions for its independence as being exactly the same in the defence field as the conditions which it enjoyed when it was a dependent territory.³⁶

The Conservatives were not to be satisfied with this answer, and during the full dress debate on the White Paper,

³⁴ Cmnd. 2901, p. 8. See also, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Weekly Hansard, No. 682, col. 239.

³⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Weekly Hansard, No. 682, col. 243.

³⁶ Ibid. at col. 244.



Mr. J. Enoch Power, the shadow Defense Minister, provided some strong evidence which weakens the Labor position on Aden. Britain agreed in 1964 to convene a conference to fix the date of independence for the South Arabian Federation, such date to be not later than 1968. There was further agreement that this conference would conclude a defense agreement "under which Britian would retain her military base at Aden for the defence of the Federation."³⁷ Thus, the Conservatives argued, Britain could not withdraw from Aden in 1968 without breaking an already-existing commitment.

The White Paper points out that the Far East and Southern Asia is the area "where the greatest danger to peace may be in the next decade."³⁸ British presence will be maintained, but reduction of forces will take place as

³⁷Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, March 7, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 62, Col. 1756. See also "Federation of South Arabia, Conference Report," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 2414 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), p. 3. "The delegates expressed the desire that the constitutional status of Aden should be raised to that of the other States of the Federation; and they accordingly requested that British sovereignty be renounced as soon as practicable, subject to the continued exercise by the British Government of such powers as may be necessary for the defence of the Federation and the fulfillment of Britain's world wide responsibilities. The Secretary of State informed the delegates that the British Government were prepared to accede to this request."

³⁸Cmnd. 2901, p. 8.



soon as conditions permit. Facilities in Malaysia and Singapore will be maintained as long as the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore "agree that we should do so on acceptable conditions."³⁹ The White Paper reports that discussions have been begun with the Government of Australia concerning military bases in that country if necessary.⁴⁰ However, the major part of military presence East of Suez was explained in terms of the confrontation with Indonesia, and during the debate, the Government put its position "on the line" in stronger terms than those used in the White Paper. Mr. Healey frankly stated that:

The fact is that Britain has got to stay east of Suez in any case for many years. We have direct responsibility for the internal security and external defence of territories which are unlikely to become independent for some time yet.

.....

The question is not whether we stay east of Suez, but in what strength and for how long.⁴¹

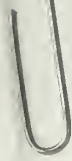
The White Paper also announced that substantial forces would remain in Hong Kong but that forces would be withdrawn from the Caribbean and the South African Territories.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid. (Underscoring this author's.)

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, March 7, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 62, Cols. 1779-1780.

⁴² Cmnd. 2901, p. 8.



On the issue of deployment of forces in Germany, the White Paper declared that "we think it right to maintain our ground forces in Germany at about their existing level."⁴³ But there was a major proviso attached to this statement, and that was that means must be found to meet the foreign exchange costs of the British Army of the Rhine.

Further deployment of forces, then, is scheduled to be limited to Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, the Persian Gulf, Malaysia, and Borneo, and Hong Kong with forces in Germany if, and it is a big if, the foreign exchange cost problem can be solved. This deployment envisions a gradual but complete withdrawal from Libya, Aden, Swazeland, Gan, and British Guiana (now Guyana). It also envisions a reduction in forces in Eastern Malaysia and Brunei as conditions permit.⁴⁴

The White Paper does not deal in terms of the numbers of troops to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean or the area East of Suez. However, the message is clear; there will be reduction of overseas commitments to the extent required to permit operation of the defense establishment with the fixed budgetary ceiling.

⁴³ Cmnd. 2901, p. 6.

⁴⁴ "Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1966, Part II. Defence Estimates 1966-67," Cmnd. 2902 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), pp. 5-15.

IV. AN INDEPENDENT POLICY

The White Paper declares that the "first purpose of our armed forces will be to defend the freedom of the British People."⁴⁵ At first reading, this pronouncement appears to indicate that when all else has been said Britain would adopt a policy of independence if required in defense of the home islands. But such an interpretation is inconsistent with much else in the White Paper. There is the announcement that "Britain will not undertake major operations of war except in cooperation with allies."⁴⁶ The conclusion is offered that "the security of these islands still depends primarily on preventing war in Europe"⁴⁷ and that "continuation of the North Atlantic Alliance is vital to our survival."⁴⁸ Thus, the White Paper sets out a dependent defense policy: allies, especially NATO, provide the cornerstone of defense planning.

The question of the independence of British defense policy was raised at the time the White Paper was made public by the resignation of the Navy Minister. It will be remembered that Mr. Mayhew's letter of resignation dealt not with the fact that carrier aviation in the Royal Navy

⁴⁵Cmnd. 2901, p. 4.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁸Ibid.



was to be phased out, but with his disagreement with the political and strategic assumption on which Britain's policy was based.⁴⁹ By custom, he was permitted to make a personal statement in the House explaining his resignation, and he took the opportunity presented to explain the nature of his disagreement.

I shall try to show that the approach to the Defence Review has been mistaken, that the proposed cuts in resources are not matched by the proposed cuts in commitments and that the result will be strain on the Armed Forces, or dependence on the United States beyond what this House should accept.⁵⁰

Although Mr. Mayhew's concern for the strain on the armed forces was genuine--his own experience at Dunkirk was still too real--the more basic reason for his resignation was that the policy of the White Paper made Britain too dependent on the United States. "We shall be acting not as a power in our own right, but an extension of United States Power--not as Allies, but as auxiliaries of the United States."⁵¹

⁴⁹See text at note 20, supra, p. 10.

⁵⁰Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, February 22, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 53, Col. 255.

⁵¹Ibid. at Col. 261. Mr. Mayhew was a member of the first Territorial unit to land in France in September, 1939. He was witness to the disaster which was caused by such deployment of under-equipped and untrained forces. His personal statement concluded with the kind of appeal which marks a high moment in a parliamentary statement. "Most of the men whom I knew then came back safely through Dunkirk. But more would come back if they had the tanks and air

Much of the debate concerning dependency on the United States concerned the decision to buy F111A aircraft from the United States. The White Paper announced that the F111A would be bought to fill the gap in strike/reconnaissance aircraft which would occur in the 1970's between the time the present Canberras became obsolete and the Anglo/French variable geometry aircraft became operational.⁵² This decision was made after considering using a British/French aircraft, the Spey/Mirage, and a British aircraft, the Buccaneer 2, to do the job.⁵³ Both of these were rejected on the basis of performance and cost.⁵⁴

The point at issue was not the fact that an airplane like the F111A was required. In his personal statement, the ex-Minister of Defense for the Royal Navy disposed of that question; even the Navy agreed that it was essential to obtain such an airplane.

It should be placed to the credit of the Admiralty Board that from the beginning to the end of the Defence Review it stoutly maintained that if we were to remain east of Suez we should need F111A's for the job as well as carriers.⁵⁵

support which they needed and deserved I am convinced that the House will never allow that kind of thing to happen again." See Daily Hansard, as cited, Col. 265.

⁵² Cmnd. 2901, pp. 10-11.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, February 22, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 53, Col. 256.



There was to be no bomber/carrier controversy between the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force such as had caused the "Admiral's revolt" in the U. S. Defense Department. The objection was not to the plane itself, but to the fact that it increased military and economic dependence on the United States.

In his opening statement, the Secretary of State for Defense said that the "foreign exchange cost of the F111A purchase will be met by sales of British equipment to the United States and third countries."⁵⁶ The Opposition pointed out that it was not quite that simple, and that the planes were to be bought on credit with an opportunity for British firms to bid, without differential or tariff restrictions, on orders for American equipment.⁵⁷

Further dependency on the United States was announced in the White Paper in the decision to use more C130's to make good the shortcomings in the performance of the Belfast in air transport.⁵⁸ This increased air-lift capability takes on additional importance when viewed alongside the decision to retire the mobility represented by carriers.

⁵⁶ Ibid., cols. 240-241.

⁵⁷ Ibid., cols. 244-245.

⁵⁸ Cmnd. 2901, p. 12.

But if this is to be the policy of the future, an increasing dependence on long range aircraft [the F111A's and the C130's], surely we shall have a chain of bases The policy to ensure a chain of new bases, such as the island base strategy, to which very little reference is made in the White Paper, would inevitably lead to further reliance upon American equipment.⁵⁹

It is not only equipment that brings about the dependence on the United States. Mr. Mayhew suggested, in his personal statement, that the world role envisioned on the limited funds available also brought about this dependency.

I cannot feel that it is right that a nation which considers itself strong enough to take on a world role . . . can, at the same time, say it is too poor to afford the sailors with the ships and equipment that they need for the tasks they are ordered to carry out.⁶⁰

Because the Government is unwilling to spend the money to support a world role, the ability to play the role depends on the United States.

The White Paper policy would mean virtually taking no action at all on our own initiative, even if appealed to by those whom we are supposed to be supporting. If they appeal for our help, we shall stand idly by. Alternatively, we shall act with the consent and support, or promised support, of our vastly more powerful ally, the United States, and the more we act the more we shall depend on their support I come to the reviews' last line of

⁵⁹ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, March 7, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 62, Col. 1850. Sir John Eden for the Opposition.

⁶⁰ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Daily Hansard, February 22, 1966, Vol. 725, No. 53, Col. 259.



defence: our allies--that is to say the Americans--will help us out.⁶¹

The White Paper, then, does spell out a defense policy which is clearly not one of complete independence. There is dependence on allies--NATO and especially the United States. There is a heavy dependence on the United States for equipment, and the White Paper appears to further that dependence. A question to be considered in a later chapter is whether this dependence is so great as to preclude any kind of independent action at all in the political/military sphere.

⁶¹Ibid., cols. 260-261.

CHAPTER II

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

After having considered the 1966 Defense White Paper, it is now appropriate to examine some aspects of British defense policy in days gone by. This chapter will deal with the period from 1919 until 1939. A subsequent chapter will consider British defense policy from 1945 until the present.

I. THE FIRST DECADE--IMPERIAL DEFENSE

A discussion of British Defense policy in the inter-war period can be approached in various ways. There is no better way, however, than to start with Sir Winston Spencer Churchill's evaluation of the policy of the War Cabinet which was announced after the Armistice in 1919. During the course of the war, the British Empire had mobilized, and a vast and efficient military machine had been created.¹ In 1919, the War Cabinet decided that this machine should be rapidly dismantled, and the service departments were told to base their planning on the assumption that the "British Empire will not be engaged in any great war during the next

¹For an analysis of the contributions of the component parts of the Empire to the Allied victory in World War I, see Donald Cowie, An Empire Prepared (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1939), pp. 40-151.



ten years, and that no expeditionary forces will be required."² Churchill himself proposed, in 1928, that this assumption be reiterated for another ten-year period, but he added the caveat that the assumption should be reviewed yearly by the Committee on Imperial Defense.³ The ten-year rule remained in effect until 1932 when the MacDonalld Government abandoned it.

Since the British Governments of the decade of the 'twenties were proceeding on the basis of the "no war for ten years" rule, it is understandable that the British defense policy of the period reverted, in part, to the policy of imperial defense. The duty of the Royal Navy was the protection of the lines of communication to the Empire; the duty of the Army was to act as an Imperial police force. During the 1920's then, the Navy had a mission which was closer to its mission in war than was the mission assigned to the Army. There is, of course, a quantitative distinction to be drawn between the peace-time and war-time mission of the Navy; but protection of the sea lanes and preparation for blockade were logical parts of Navy planning and preparation even in the 1920's.⁴ Unlike the Navy, the Army had a

²Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 50.

³Ibid.

⁴W. F. Wentworth-Shields, The Empire on Guard (London: Faber and Faber, Limited, 1938), pp. 43-45



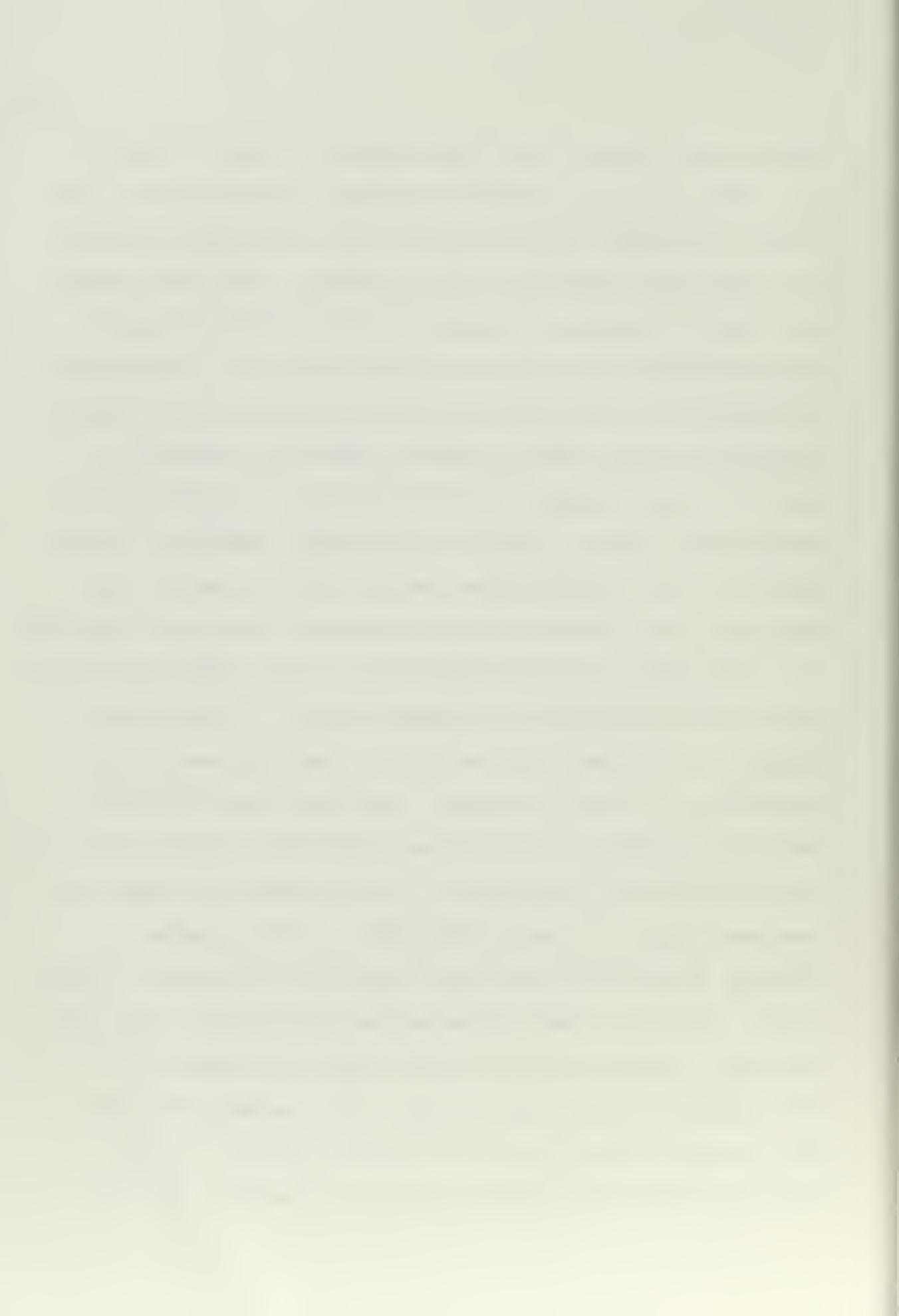
mission in the first decade of the inter-war period which was quite dissimilar from its mission in war and was, indeed, unlike the then existing tasks assigned to the other Armies of the world. The conscript Armies of the continent served almost entirely at home and had the sole duty of protecting land frontiers from invasion. The British Army usually had about one half of its regular strength serving outside of the United Kingdom and had developed a special system which was responsive to its special requirements. In the 1920's, the mission of the Army was clear: First to provide garrisons overseas; second, to reinforce these garrisons in time of war; third, to defend the United Kingdom; fourth, to intervene abroad on behalf of British interests.⁵ Its mission stressed overseas responsibility and this primary responsibility was later to be modified only because of air power.

The special system which the Army used to meet its special requirements was the Cardwell System. Its main principles were the maintenance of a Regular reserve and the use of "Linked Battalions." The Regular soldier never really lost his identification with his regiment. After his tour of active service, he would return to civilian life with an obligation to rejoin his regiment in an emergency. The relatively small regular Army had a reserve of non-commissioned

⁵Cowie, op. cit., supra note 1, p. 177.

officers and officers who could respond on short notice to form the cadre of an expanded military establishment. The "linked Battalion" system provided for a battalion at home and a battalion abroad for each regiment. The home battalion handled training of recruits and provided the Regular Army's defense reserve in the United Kingdom. The system worked well and permitted the Army to discharge its responsibilities as the imperial police force at a minimum of cost. It was, however, not an easy task to transform this establishment into a general war machine. However, in the decade of the 'twenties, the "no war for ten years" rule permitted Army planners to be unconcerned about this problem.

The "police" responsibilities of the Army during this period were exercised in a number of ways. It would be a mistake to conclude that the Army of the inter-war period was strictly an army of peace. From 1919 until 1938, the Army was engaged in thirty-three significant "police actions" in the service of the Empire. Some of these were small and involved only a few men; in November of 1937, company strength forces were moved from Bermuda to Trinidad to quell riots. However, other of the actions were large scale and provided a testing ground for new tactical concepts. In 1922, unrest in Waziristan, India, saw the beginning of a major action, which lasted until March, 1924. A total of 340,000 troops were employed during the two-year period.



The job of policeman for the Empire could very well involve large-scale military operations.⁶

Military operations in India and the Middle East provided a testing ground for the new weapon of World War I-- the airplane. Liddell Hart argues that the 1930 debate over the significance of air power was really a useless argument since air control had been in regular use for ten years in the Middle East and had proved itself there.⁷ Aircraft had also played their part in India, not only in reconnaissance roles, but in carrying out bombing missions. British defense policy in respect to Afghanistan, even in the early 1920's, assigned the primary role to the R.A.F., and the Indian Field Army was no longer expected to mount an Afghan invasion. In 1922, the R.A.F. was assigned the responsibility of the garrisoning of Iraq, and control was accomplished with air power instead of field forces.⁸

If the above-described air operations proved the importance of air power to British military thinkers as Liddell-Hart argues, they also brought about a less desirable side effect. It was so much cheaper, in relative terms, to garrison a country like Iraq with R.A.F. than with the

⁶Ibid., pp. 172-176.

⁷Basil H. Liddell Hart, The British Way in Warfare (London: Faber and Faber, Limited, 1932), pp. 139-140.

⁸Ibid., pp. 143-161.

Army that there was little attempt to develop interservice tactics and strategy during the period. Black and white comparisons were drawn: in India, 100 planes and 2,000 officers and men were able to accomplish a task which had previously been the responsibility of 60,000 men of the 200,000-man Army in India. The cost of the garrison in Iraq dropped from 20,000,000 pounds under the Army in 1920 to 1,500,000 under the R.A.F. in 1930. These comparisons led to the conclusion that the R.A.F. could do exactly the same job as the Army at one-tenth the cost; the Army was, accordingly, denied appropriations which it needed to develop itself into a fighting arm to move with the advance of air power.

The airplane can probably claim with justification to be the single most important piece of military hardware to join the Empire's arsenal in the 'twenties. But the tank was not far behind. In the period from 1927 to 1930, the British Army became mechanized. Tanks were no longer an instrument to be held in reserve and concentrated for the decisive blow in a battle. They were also to be used as the spearhead of the advance. In classic terms, they were to be used as both heavy and light cavalry. It was well into the 1930's before tank doctrine was completely understood by British military planners, but the change in thinking had



started.⁹ One cannot help wondering if the German African campaign might not have ended differently if this basic change in military philosophy had not been accomplished in the British Army in the inter-war period.

It is not unreasonable to conclude that British defense policy in the first decade of the inter-war period in respect to the Army and Air Force was a success. The policy, as has been noted, was based on the "ten year rule," and that rule proved valid for the decade involved. The Army accomplished its job as the Empire's policeman at a cost to the British taxpayer which was not unbearable. New doctrine was developed and the thinking, if not the equipment, was superior to any in the world. The Air Force was also growing as a separate service. Its mission was widening and it was demonstrating that it could take its place alongside its sister services as an important and vital component of imperial defense. What, however, of the Navy during this period? In 1921, the Imperial Conference declared that cooperation among the various portions of the Empire was required to produce naval security and that "equality with the naval strength of any other power is a minimum standard for that purpose."¹⁰ Shortly after this

⁹Ibid., pp. 185-201.

¹⁰Summary of the Transactions of the Conference of



statement was made, the Washington Naval Conference convened.¹¹ The proceedings of the Conference indicate that Britain obtained the desired minimum standard of "equality with any other power." As a result of the agreements reached at the Conference and the 5:5:3 formula, the Royal Navy was on a par with the United States in capital ships. This met the minimum standard, and it was met in a "contest" with a genuinely friendly power. Relations between the United States and Great Britain were certainly good, and only a wild imagination could envision conflict between the two. In Europe, Britain had the advantage over both the Italian and French fleets in a ratio of about 5 to 3.5.¹² Indeed, for some time after the Conference, Britain had an advantage over the United States in a ratio of 5.8 to 5.2. When H.M.S. Nelson and H.M.S. Rodney joined the fleet, four older ships were scrapped, and the ratio was reduced from 5.5 to 5.2. There were differences in weight of metal which

the Prime Ministers and Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, June 20-August 5, 1921, as reproduced in "Present Problems of the Commonwealth of British Nations," International Conciliation, No. 167, October, 1921, p. 16.

¹¹ See "Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armaments," International Conciliation, No. 169, December, 1921, pp. 5-77.

¹² G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs 1920-1939 (fourth edition; London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 63-65.



tended to offset this advantage, however. The 16-inch guns of U.S.S. West Virginia, U.S.S. Colorado, and U.S.S. Maryland had ranges of 34,500 yards compared to the maximum gun in the Royal Navy, the 15-inch, 30,000-yard main battery in H.M.S. Hood.¹³

In terms of capital ships, the Royal Navy could not be dissatisfied with the Washington Conference. The Conference put no limitations on cruisers and Britain was ahead of any other nation in both numbers and ability to use these "guardians of the life line of empire." The Naval position was, therefore, equally as good as the positions of the other services in the 'twenties. Problems were to come, and perhaps should have been foreseen, but they were problems of the next decade.

II. THE SECOND DECADE--DISARMAMENT AND REARMAMENT

An acceptable starting point for a review of defense policy in the second decade of the inter-war period is the

¹³For an interesting discussion of the Washington Conference, see Frederick Moore, America's Naval Challenge (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 77-103; for a ship-by-ship analysis of the capital ships of both Navies see Moore, op. cit., pp. 118-119. Although the U. S. Navy could claim the heavier guns and the greater range, three of the British ships (H.M.S. Renown, H.M.S. Hood, and H.M.S. Repulse) could claim speeds of 31 knots. The newest and best U. S. battleships could claim only 22 knots.

Defense White Paper issued in 1935. Up until 1935, there were separate votes on the estimates for each of the services, and these votes generated parliamentary discussion on defense matters. However, there was no debate of defense as a whole. In 1935, defense estimates were increased in response to world affairs, and the Government felt that a "debate on Imperial Defence as a whole" was in order. A White Paper¹⁴ was issued which set forth the basic principles of British defense policy. The principal aim of British foreign policy was proclaimed to be the establishment of peace; the methods used to accomplish this were varied but included the following:

1. Support of the League of Nations.
2. Promotion of international instruments designed to produce security among nations such as:
 - a. Briand-Kellogg Pact
 - b. The Four-Power and Nine-Power Treaties concerning the Far East.
 - c. The Locarno Treaties.
 - d. Proposals for increasing security in Eastern Europe and the Danube basin.
3. The return into "the comity of nations all the countries which have been enemies in the late war," by suspension of reparations, membership in the League, evacuation of the Rhineland, etc.

¹⁴See "White Paper on Defense Issued in connection with the House of Commons Debate on March 11, 1935," International Conciliation, No. 310, May, 1935, pp. 39-48.

4. Reduction and limitation of international armaments.¹⁵

These methods were declared in the White Paper to be still part of the defense policy of the Government. But the Government could no longer "close its eyes to the fact that adequate defenses are still required for security."¹⁶ Unilateral disarmament had not worked, and serious deficiencies had accumulated in all services, and the danger point had been reached. The increases in the Air Force begun in 1934 were to be speeded up, and the Army and Navy would be improved by "supplying technical deficiencies, providing up-to-date equipment and adequate personnel and reserves of war material."¹⁷

The White Paper concluded with an assignment of service missions. The Navy "is, as always, the first line of defense."¹⁸ In order that this first line have its proper equipment, more cruisers were required immediately, and the battle fleet had to be updated. Thus, the Washington Naval Treaty and the London Treaty of 1930 would have to be re-considered.

The Washington Naval Treaty, discussed above, dealt only with capital ships. Age, not numbers or weight was the problem in that category. The London Naval Treaty dealt

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 39-41.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 44.

with cruisers and smaller ships, and that is where the real problem lie. The London Naval Treaty set limits on cruiser strength, and the Admiralty was responsible for the dangerously low limits which were set for Great Britain. Up until 1930, the Admiralty had insisted on seventy cruisers as the absolute minimum; in 1930, it was decided that fifty was an acceptable minimum. It is arguable that this decision was made by the Admiralty because of the improved international climate created by the spirit of Locarno and the Briand-Kellogg Pact. Nonetheless, it was made, and Great Britain was to suffer because of it. Another aspect of the London Treaty which contributed to Britain's disadvantageous naval position in 1935 was that portion of the treaty proclaiming a five-year holiday in capital ship construction. Since the Royal Navy ships covered by the Washington agreement were older than the normal, Britain could not replace at the pace originally envisioned at Washington by the Admiralty representatives in 1920.¹⁹

The Army was assigned its new mission in the White Paper also. Defenses of ports, coastal defense, and anti-aircraft defense were given high priority. Mechanization

¹⁹See Bernard Acworth, The Navy and the Next War (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited, 1934), pp. 55-67, and 200-230; Gathorne Hardy, op. cit., supra note 12, pp. 189-197, for a discussion on the absolute minimum.

and modernization of equipment were included.²⁰ The changing mission of the Army now placed home defense first; in the 1920's defense of the United Kingdom was its third mission and the overseas garrisons and their reinforcement in war came first and second, respectively. Now garrison duties were second in importance, and by 1938, there was no reinforcement mission left.²¹

In the 1938 debates on the Army Estimates, this change of mission and philosophy was spelled out in detail by the then Secretary of State for War, Mr. Hore-Belisha. The overseas garrisons were to be maintained in time of peace at a strength which would be adequate for defense if war should come. Local forces were to be used where possible, and those regular Army units which could be replaced by local forces were to return to the United Kingdom. The primary purpose of the Army was declared to be home defense. Air attack was the major item to be defended against. Internal security was also assigned as an Army responsibility. The Territorial Army and the Regular Army together were to accomplish these new tasks.²²

²⁰White Paper, supra note 14, p. 46.

²¹Cowie, op. cit. supra note 1, p. 178.

²²Wentworth-Shields, op. cit. supra note 4, pp. 68-70.

"The Royal Air Force has, as its principal role, to provide (with the cooperation of ground defenses) for the protection of the United Kingdom and particularly London against air attack."²³ As indicated above, expansion of the R.A.F. had begun in 1934, and the tempo was now increased. Numbers of planes and numbers of pilots were increased, and aircraft design and performance were improved.²⁴

By the time the Defense White Paper was issued in March of 1938, progress could be reported. Most impressive, perhaps, is the report of Navy tonnage building: from about 140,000 tons of shipping being built in 1935, the January 1, 1938, figure had risen to almost 350,000 tons. Two capital ships, one aircraft carrier, and seven cruisers were under construction. During the year, from April, 1938, to March, 1939, some sixty new ships were to be put in service. Industrial production of armament for both the Army and Air Force was reported on the increase. Fifty-nine new air stations were acquired. Increases in personnel in all services were reported, and Civil Defense preparations were under way.²⁵

²³White Paper, supra note 14, p. 46.

²⁴Wentworth-Shields, op. cit. supra note 4, pp. 81-96.

²⁵"Statement Relating to Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmd. 5682 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1938).

By the time the 1939 White Paper was issued, more progress could be reported. The civilian aspects of defense planning, however, play the major part in the 1939 statement. National Service, Air Raid Precautions, evaluation plans are set forth as part of the Nation's defense policy. There is an expression of determination in the White Paper that was perhaps lacking in previous statements on defense.

. . . . But in the absence of a general reduction of armaments it is inevitable that this country should continue to take the steps necessary, in the light of present developments, for its own protection and for the discharge of its responsibilities elsewhere.

. . . His Majesty's Government . . . are confident that the people of this country will be ready to bear the heavy burden involved, and will share the determination of His Majesty's Government to ensure the adequacy of our Defence preparations.²⁶

In 1939, a study group of the Royal Institute of International Affairs considered the issue of Imperial defense in its study of the political and strategic interests of the United Kingdom.²⁷ Defense of the Empire was viewed as a matter of mutual assistance. The Dominions were not able to look after their own interests in an adequate fashion, and, by inference, the United Kingdom needed the

²⁶Statement Relating to Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmd. 5944 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1939), p. 19.

²⁷Royal Institute of International Affairs, Political and Strategic Interests of the United Kingdom, An Outline (London: Oxford University Press, 1939).

Dominions. No longer, however, did the United Kingdom take the Empire to war with it, and the Dominions would have to make their own decisions when the time came. Great Britain unreservedly promised to go to the assistance of any Dominion that was attacked. Imperial defense now had six basic principles:

1. The defense of the British Isles from every likely form of attack must be assured.
2. The self-governing Dominions must shoulder, and indeed have accepted, the responsibility for their own defense until such time as reinforcements can reach them from other parts of the Commonwealth.
3. India, with the help of the British elements of the army and the Royal Air Force in India, is responsible for her own defense.
4. The Colonies, fortresses, and protectorates are held by British regular garrisons, in some cases reinforced by regular native troops or by colonial volunteer forces, and in other cases protected by native troops alone.
5. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force must keep the sea communications of the Empire open.
6. An Imperial Reserve, in the form of a military field force and air forces, must be available to send as a reinforcement to any threatened point.²⁸

Defense policy, as an aspect of a country's foreign policy, must be judged by its results. If the main object of British defense policy in the inter-war period was the

²⁸Ibid., p. 249.

preservation of the peace, then the events of September, 1939, demonstrated the failure of the policy. However, if the purpose of the policy is to be prepared for the war that might come if the country's foreign policy fails, then a different judgment might obtain. In the first decade of the inter-war period, the "no war for ten years" rule proved sound, and Imperial defense, as it then operated, was a success. The British defense establishment integrated the use of the airplane and the tank into its philosophy of arms. There was no Billy Mitchell in the British Army, and the Royal Air Force was accepted by her sister services with an acceptable level of complaint. The Royal Navy, even with its "notorious reserve," accepted aviation and the Fleet Air Arm made progress in carrier use.

In the second decade of the inter-war period, the defense planners dropped the "ten year" rule; perhaps 1932 was a few years too late, but it was not disastrously late. The major flaw to be found in the defense policy of the 'thirties is the attempt to force other nations to disarm by the example of unilateral disarmament. By 1935, the Government could well admit that the policy had not worked. In fairness, it must be admitted that the Government tried to regain its lost ground. But the failures of British arms in the early part of the war resulted most directly from the fact that the lost ground could not be regained.

As to the separate services in the 1930's, the Navy, it appears, comes off third best. The Washington Naval Conference did very little, if anything, to put the Royal Navy at an advantage. The London Conference gave too much ground on the issue of cruisers, but even this was not a tragic loss.

The threat of surface attacks was great, but the Graf Spee and the Bismark were disposed of. The real flaw to be found in the naval policy of the 'thirties is the lack of appreciation of the submarine menace. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement is not significant because of the 100:35 ratio; it is significant in that the German Navy could build a submarine force of almost unlimited size. Not only were the Navy's planners wrong in letting the Germans build such a force, but they did far too little in developing an anti-submarine warfare capability. When Churchill asked the United States for ships, it was not for capital ships or cruisers but for destroyers which could play an ASW role.

On balance, it is reasonable to conclude that British defense policy in the inter-war period was clearly not a failure. Indeed, it was more successful than many of the 1938-1939 commentators thought it would be. The British Isles were defended, the Dominions remained free from attack, the gates of India remained guarded, and the sea lanes were kept open. The country was prepared for war; it

was not as well prepared as it should have been, but perhaps democratic nations never are.

CHAPTER III

POST WORLD WAR II

It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the policy or the strategy of the British defense establishment during the Second World War. However, as a vehicle to provide a means of transition from the previous discussion of the inter-war period to a consideration of post-war defense policy, it is appropriate to have in mind Churchill's theme for his work on the Second World War: "In War: Resolution; In Defeat: Defiance; In Victory: Magnanimity; In Peace: Good Will."¹ That briefly sums up British defense policy during the war: resolution, defiance, and victory.

I. THE DECADES OF DECLINE

As World War II ended, Britain faced a new and uncertain situation in world affairs. She had created a tremendous war machine whose contributions to victory throughout the world were, to say the least, major ones. But the cost of the military victory had left the country a financial shadow of its former self, and the post-war world was not the place in which immediate restoration of its economic and financial situation was possible.

¹Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. viii.

The development of a defense policy in the transitional period was a major task for the new Labor Government in the United Kingdom. At the time of Germany's collapse, there were over five million men and women in the British armed forces, and approximately four million were involved in war production.² Out of a total population of some fifty million,³ then, almost 20 per cent were directly involved in the war machine. The major defense problem of the immediate post-war period was the accomplishing of massive demobilization while at the same time maintaining a defense posture which would permit the satisfactory completion of remaining missions and tasks.

The 1946 Defense White Paper set out these tasks:

The provision of our share of the forces to ensure the execution by Germany and Japan of the terms of surrender.

The provision of our share of the forces for the occupation of Austria.

The provision of forces to maintain law and order in Venezia Giulia.

The provision of forces to assist the Greek nation in its recovery.

The provision of forces to enable us to carry out our responsibilities in Palestine.

²"Statement Relating to Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmd. 6743 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), p. 2.

³Joseph Whitaker, Whitaker's Almanack (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1946), p. 611.

The liquidation of Japanese Occupation of Allied territories in South-East Asia.

The maintenance of internal security and settled conditions throughout the Empire.

The safeguarding of our communications and the upkeep of our bases.⁴

The White Paper indicated that a defense establishment of considerable size was still required to accomplish the missions set forth above. Over one million men would have to remain in uniform, and compulsory service under the National Service Act was still to be required.⁵

The lessons learned during the war years were not to be lost, and the 1946 White Paper promised concrete proposals to take advantage of the "development which has taken place during the war in the central machinery for the control of our war effort."⁶ The promise was made good when a white paper on "Central Organization for Defence" was published in October, 1946.⁷ This White Paper reviewed the wartime arrangement whereby the Prime Minister assumed the title of Minister of Defense and instituted the War Cabinet and Chief of Staff Committee.⁸ It was concluded that this

⁴Cmd. 6743, pp. 4-5.

⁵Ibid., p. 6.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

⁷"Central Organisation for Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmd. 6923 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946).

⁸Cmd. 6923, p. 4.

centralized control needed to be retained, but that the peace-time political environment would preclude the Prime Minister from maintaining the function and the Defense Committee and a Ministry of Defense was established.⁹ The Defense Committee, the Ministry, and the Chief of Staffs Committee with a Joint Staff system were designed to provide comprehensive defense proposals which would ensure that "the resources available for defence are laid out to the best advantage in terms of manpower, weapons and equipment, works services, amenities, etc."¹⁰

Britain had, then, an organization for defense which incorporated the lessons learned in World War II, and it had certain missions and tasks to be accomplished. The main problem which faced the defense planners during the immediate post-war period was that of the reduction of manpower and the almost unbearable costs involved in overseas security. Notwithstanding Churchill's disclaimer¹¹--"I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire"--the Empire was liquidated in large measure. No longer did Britain have the far-flung Empire to provide military and naval bases around the world.

⁹Cmd. 6923, p. 6.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹William P. Snyder, The Politics of British Defense Policy, 1945-1962 (/n.p./: Ohio State University Press, 1964), pp. 11 and 226-230.

Some bases were retained through the sufferance of the new nation who had left colony status behind. In other situations, the bases were simply not available. By 1954, the concept of an air-lifted central strategic reserve came into being. In that year, the Government proposed that there be a gradual reduction in the size of the Army, and that it be reconstituted in Britain as a strategic reserve ready to fly to trouble spots which still required British intervention.¹² The second half of the answer to the question of mobility was found in the "Commando." This Navy solution took the World War II term and created an entirely different unit. Aircraft carriers were modified to carry personnel and equipment of a Royal Marine Commando and, hence, floating bases were provided which could respond to a crisis anywhere in the world.¹³

During this same post-war period, Britain also faced the dilemma of the nuclear weapon. Britain had had a part in the development of the atomic bombs which ended the Japanese War. She continued development of her own bomb until in 1953 the Government embarked on a program to develop a strategic nuclear force.¹⁴ This force was based on bomber delivered weapons, and it used as its model the

¹²Ibid., p. 12.

¹³Ibid., pp. 15-16.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 24-25.

U. S. Strategic Air Command. Hence, Britain, her Empire gone and her once supreme world financial position lost forever, still could claim a place among the nuclear giants.

It was during this same post-war period that Britain entered into the alliance system which was a radical departure from established principle of the past. The obligations of NATO, SEATO, and CENTO were a clear departure from the traditional maritime strategy of the past. Britain found itself with a permanent military commitment on the Continent almost without knowing why. The invasion of 1944 was an obvious necessity, and the occupation responsibilities were a logical consequence. However, before the occupation ended, the Cold War had intensified and NATO became the next reasonable step. The United States became involved in Korea, and Britain was left to shoulder a much heavier burden in Europe than had been anticipated. Gradually, and because there was simply no other alternative, Britain accepted its roll in the alliance structure and by the mid-fifties Sir Anthony Eden could observe that an effective defense system in Western Europe was essential to the security of the United Kingdom.¹⁵ The nation which had historically relied on its Navy and had refused alliances in Europe found itself firmly committed around the world through the alliance system.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 18-24.

By the mid-fifties then, Britain had responded with viable solutions to the problems in defense raised in the first decade after World War II. Her response had cost money, but she was still, in her view, a world power to be reckoned with. But there were disquieting signs: except for period of war, defense expenditures had not in the past exceeded 3 per cent of the Gross National Product. In contrast, in 1952, almost 12 per cent of the G.N.P. was going to defense.¹⁶ Rapid technological change and loss of overseas bases had forced security costs up and up. In order to do as well in the second decade after World War II, continued high or even higher defense investment could be required. There would be new problems in the decade between 1955 and 1965. Could they be solved as effectively as those in the period between 1945 and 1955? Suez provided part of the answer, and it was in the negative.

The Suez crises provided clear evidence that the British defense establishment was, indeed, living in a changing world. The pressure brought by the United States and the Soviet Union, coupled with the economic drain of the enterprise itself, soon resulted in the withdrawal of British and French forces. It had become absolutely clear that the gulf between national resources and political desire on the international scene could not be ignored.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 33-40.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 229-235.

In the decade after Suez, an attempt was made to adjust Britain's defense position in the light of her economic resources. In 1962, the Conservative Government set forth the basic objectives of British defense policy in its Parliamentary Command Paper on defense.¹⁸ The objectives were threefold: to maintain the security of the country; to carry out obligations for the protection of British territories overseas and of "those to whom we owe a special duty by treaty or otherwise"; and to make a contribution to free world defense through various individual and collective security arrangements.¹⁹ The statement declared the Government's support of disarmament and then proceeded to outline the forces and policies that would be used to achieve the desired defense objectives. Insurance was required, declared the statement, against the possible loss of fixed installations overseas by keeping men and heavy equipment afloat and by increasing the air and sea lift capability of the Strategic Reserve.²⁰ The statement further indicated that there would be a balance of nuclear and conventional forces and that there would be continued support for Britain's alliance responsibilities.

¹⁸"Statement on Defence, 1962, The Next Five Years," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 1639 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1962).

¹⁹Cmnd. 1639, pp. 3-4.

²⁰Ibid., p. 6.

In February, 1965, the Labor Government published its revision to the Conservative-drafted "five year plan."²¹ There was a restatement of policy objectives: the guarantee of national security and a continual effort toward peace and stability in the world as a whole. These objectives were declared to be inseparable and unattainable by armed force alone.²² The Labor Government also indicated its support of disarmament in stronger terms than those used by the Conservative Government. However, there were still the practical realizations that effective disarmament was a long way off, and the Government indicated that reliance must still be placed on the alliance system. "Meanwhile, Britain's security will depend on alliances with her friends in many parts of the world. Interdependence is the only basis for national security in the nuclear age."²³ There were three major roles seen for the British defense establishment in 1965: support of a nuclear force; a contribution toward the defense of Western Europe through NATO; and assistance in keeping the peace elsewhere in the world. However, the Government declared there must be a constant review of the balance among the three roles in order that defense

²¹"Statement on Defence Estimates, 1965," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 2592 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965).

²²Ibid., p. 5.

²³Ibid., p. 4.

expenditures could be reconciled with other claims, domestic in nature on the national economy.²⁴

There was a proposal contained in the 1965 statement for an Atlantic Nuclear Force, and Britain offered to make available to the Western Alliance her nuclear capability and to subject it to collective authority.

During 1965, a major change in the British defense establishment was completed. The Defence (Transfer of Function) Act, 1964,²⁵ provided for the complete unification of the headquarters level of the three services. From the days of World War II, when Churchill took the office of Defense Minister, this unification process continued to develop. In effect, this legislation provided the culmination of the efforts at centralization of defense in peacetime which were begun by the Atlee Government in 1946.²⁶ With the 1964 Act, the separate service departments were abolished and a central defense ministry took over their functions. The positions of First Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary of State for War, and Secretary of State for Air disappeared as did the Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry. The new civilian defense chief was given complete

²⁴Ibid., p. 6.

²⁵Eliz. II, ch. 15.

²⁶See text at note 7, supra, p. 47.

control for both defense policy and the machinery for the administration of the three services. The lines of authority and responsibility from the Secretary of State for Defense ran unbroken through military, scientific, and administrative chains of command.²⁷

The unified defense establishment was a product, at least in part, of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Louis Mountbatten, and it was through his influence that the military chief of the defense establishment, the Chief of the Defense Staff, was given tremendous power. The advice of the Chief of Staff Committee is presented to the Secretary of State by the Chief of the Defense Staff alone. Promotions to flag or general rank are taken out of the hands of the Service Chiefs and given to the Chief of the Defense Staff. It is not surprising to learn that Mountbatten was the Chief of Defense Staff at the time these changes were recommended.

The headquarters integration has resulted in unified field commands for the British forces around the world. An Air Marshall is in charge in the Middle East, and the Royal Navy and Army units under his command look to him and not their Service Chiefs in London for control.

The Royal Navy today provides an interesting picture of the adjustments made by Britain in the two decades

²⁷ Alden Hatch, The Mountbattens: The Last Royal Success Story (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 400-7.

following World War II and shows progress made in preparing for a new and different role. Quintin Hogg, a sometime First Lord of the Admiralty, has commented on the forward-looking Britain and has urged a new and expanding role for the Navy.²⁸ "The two-power Navy which sailed to Jutland belching smoke from her coal--or latest innovation, oil-fired boiler rooms--is as remote as the fleets of Nelson or of Drake"²⁹ None the less, there is a major part to be played by the new Navy. Hogg argues that the advantages of a sea-based conventional force with carriers and strike aircraft has been consistently undervalued by the British and that the continuing loss of, and expense of, land bases require a "supply train of fleet auxiliaries constantly at sea."³⁰

There is some evidence that Hogg's advice was being followed prior to the 1966 Defense White Paper. For the first time since World War II, the Royal Navy began to experience expansion in equipment and manpower. During the five-year period up to the end of 1964, approximately eighty new or reconstructed warships joined the fleet. Three new cruisers and four guided missile destroyers took station

²⁸ Quintin Hogg, "Britain Looks Forward," Foreign Affairs, 43:409-25, April, 1965.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 409.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 418.

with twenty-five new frigates. The building program was relatively extensive with thirty-four new ships under construction. It is important to note that five of these ships were fleet auxiliaries: two replenishment ships, and three replenishment tankers. Progress was being made in the development of Hogg's "supply train."

The Royal Navy now has four carriers in commission and one in reserve. The recently refitted H.M.S. Eagle is the largest and most powerful (44,100 tons) and ranks with any U. S. conventionally powered carrier. The Navy has also made progress with its Commando carriers and cruisers and has kept pace with the U. S. Navy in design (but not, of course, in numbers) in this field. The Royal Navy entered the nuclear submarine field when H.M.S. Dreadnought was launched and two more nuclear submarines Valiant and Warspite are under construction.³¹

The Royal Marine situation also provides some insight into the current British defense posture. The primary role of the Corps is to provide specialist assault troops in the sea-borne forces. There is a Marine Commando brigade at Singapore with two commandos (seven hundred men) with their attached Light Regiment, Royal Artillery. One Commando is

³¹Raymond V. B. Blackman (ed.), Jane's Fighting Ships, 1964-65 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), pp. IV-V and 259-311.

in Malaysian Borneo. There is a Commando at Aden which responded to the call of the Tanganyikan Government for help in the suppression of mutiny by native troops. There are other Commandos in the United Kingdom as part of the Strategic reserve. One of these units deployed early in 1964 to Kenya within forty-eight hours of call. Experience, thus far, has shown that the Royal Marine Commando is an almost perfect answer to the mobile-quick deploying force required in an age of fewer and fewer fixed bases. The Marines also provide specialist amphibious units to carry out reconnaissance, small raids and deep penetrations. The Corps fulfills the traditional role of providing detachment in Her Majesty's ships.³² The Royal Marines discharge their responsibilities with less than ten thousand men. (The U. S. Marine Corps has over two hundred thousand men). The Marines with the Royal Navy's Commando carriers have contributed significantly to making the adjustments in defense required in the 1955-1965 time period.

II. PROBLEM AREAS

The problems of defense which faced Britain during the post-war years were many and varied, but they generally

³²Col. A. P. Willasey-Wilsey, R.M., "The Royal Marines," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November, 1965, pp. 65-70.

divide themselves into four areas: conventional forces, nuclear arms, alliances, and general policy matters.

Naturally, the economic problems of the country made themselves felt in all four areas but for convenience (and hopefully for clarity) the problems will be discussed in terms of the four broad areas.

There are some general problems which faced not only the British Government but also the British people and the man in uniform. Indeed, some of the problems face the United States in the same way. There is no answer or solution to some of these, but they exist none the same and honesty requires that they be recognized.

Firstly, there is the adjustment that must be made when a nation is called upon to make significant economic sacrifice for defense when the nation knows true defense is an impossibility. A certain futility is given to the whole defense discussion.³³ This feeling is perhaps stronger in Great Britain than in the United States because they have been in a position of utter vulnerability for almost two decades.

This feeling of frustration with the purpose of defense was further deepened by the Suez crisis. Suez

³³ James L. Moulton, Defence in a Changing World (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964), pp. 17-18.

brought home, as no amount of writing or debate could, the unpleasant fact that Britain was a second-rate military power. This realization of impotency was traumatic; regardless of the reasons, the armed forces of the British Crown were beaten by the Egyptians and revenge was impossible. It is no wonder that questions were raised as to the wisdom of substantial investment in defense--it was impossible really to provide defense, and the defense establishment could not even win a small action to preserve the famous "life line." This same feeling of impotency was to appear again in the Skybolt/Polaris controversy to be discussed below.³⁴

There is another general factor which has created a problem for the professional military man in Britain as it has in the United States. Disarmament has been a policy of both Conservative and Labor Governments since World War II. The Labor Government in its 1965 Defense White Paper declared it to be a goal of British defense policy.³⁵ The confusion caused in some military minds by the Government's position on disarmament has further contributed to the frustration noted above.

These problems face not only Britain, but to varying degrees the United States as well. There is no solution,

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-22.

³⁵ See note 21, supra, p. 52.

but it is probably a healthy sign that they are at least recognized and discussed.

Discussion of the problems which Britain faced in the field of conventional forces can be reduced to the issue of resources. Could the country provide forces in sufficiently large numbers to do the job assigned? Britain's "thin red line" stretched from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Aden, Singapore, and on to Hong Kong. None of the bases is completely secure; concern has been expressed over Spain's interest in Gibraltar to China's threat to Hong Kong. Singapore is a self-governing nation, and Cyprus and even Malta are independent countries. There was Arab pressure on Aden and the base at Singapore will probably have to be evacuated by 1970. The cost of these bases is high. . . . Aden costs over \$150 million a year, and Singapore about \$650 million.³⁶ However, in the controversy over the British role "East of Suez," Wilson was a supporter of British strength in the East of Suez area.³⁷ The development of a base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean showed Wilson's intentions in the area. Britain has spent about eight and one-half million dollars thus far on the new base.

³⁶"Great Britain. A New Beginning?," Time, November 19, 1965, pp. 45-46.

³⁷Editorial in The New York Times, October 22, 1965.

Wilson is quoted as having said, "we will maintain our position East of Suez."³⁸

Notwithstanding the present Government's commitment East of Suez, conventional forces were reduced in an economy move. The British Government had to decide whether to order a new fighter for the R.A.F. or to commission a new carrier plane for the Royal Navy.³⁹ This decision was made in the light of the Government's declared intention to cut defense spending by \$280 million dollars in 1965.⁴⁰ Indeed, on August 4, 1965, the Labor Defense Minister announced that over 616 million dollars had been trimmed from the budget. He indicated that three military aircraft projects had already been canceled but that no decision had been made on the F-111. He noted that the Government fully intended to reduce the defense budget from 7 to 6 per cent of the Gross National Product. Some of this saving would affect NATO, and this aspect will be discussed shortly.

In the conventional area, the British had more pedestrian problems which, when compared to the broad policy matters above, are almost comical. Problems they are,

³⁸"Great Britain. A New Beginning?," loc. cit., supra note 36, p. 60.

³⁹"Notebook," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, October, 1965, p. 154.

⁴⁰News item in The New York Times, July 28, 1965.

however, and they exist in the United States also. The British no longer have conscription and proudly say that peace-time conscription is not part of the British way of doing things. However, the absence of conscription brought about recruiting problems which were especially severe in an era of low unemployment. Pay increases and other fringe benefits have been adopted to improve the recruiting climate, but these have increased the manpower costs of the services. Money was spent in public relations and advertising with mixed results. On October 6, 1965, the Chief of Air Staff announced that the Royal Air Force was about to reach the point where it would join the Army in having more wives and children of air men than air men themselves.⁴¹ Let the Government and Opposition fight out the East of Suez controversy; the Chief of Air Staff was concerned about where the new babies of R.A.F. fathers would live.

As has been noted previously, the British developed a strategic nuclear bomber force which, in the middle and late 'fifties, was of the caliber, if not the size, of the U. S. Strategic Air Command. The British felt their strategic nuclear force was an effective deterrent, and the Government policy received support from all but the pacifist left. Much was spent on development and production of the

⁴¹News item in The New York Times, October 7, 1965.

"V" series aircraft and the Vulcan, Victor, and Valiant with their R.A.F. crews were a match for the Strategic Air Command planes and men in the U. S. Air Force. It was recognized that these aircraft would be obsolete in the early 'sixties, and development of systems to follow the bombers began in the early 'fifties. The Blue Streak Missile was to be a hard site weapon with a range between U. S. intermediate-range and intercontinental-range missiles. A second project was undertaken in the Blue Steel "standoff" weapon; this weapon would make use of the bomber force but the launching aircraft could fire the weapon one hundred miles from target to avoid local air defense. Both these weapons represented logical follow-ons, and in the planning stages, they appeared to respond adequately to the challenges of expanding missile technology.

By 1960, there were serious problems and Blue Streak was canceled. The reasons were painfully obvious: it cost too much. The abortive effort in the missile field ended in failure. The British people paid almost \$300 million in this attempt to keep pace with the U. S. and U.S.S.R., and they had nothing to show for it. Skybolt, an American missile, was to replace it. Skybolt was not unlike Blue Steel, but it had a much greater range, one thousand miles, and Britain had the bomber force to support it. Britain was still in the nuclear race, and money had been saved. Then

came the December, 1962, announcement that the United States had canceled Skybolt, and Britain found herself without a replacement system for Blue Steel whose useful life, even extended, would terminate in 1966-1968.⁴²

President Kennedy suggested Polaris as the substitute for Skybolt, and the Nassau Agreement signified British acceptance. One might think that the Royal Navy would have welcomed the opportunity to take over the future of the British strategic nuclear deterrent, but such was not the case. The Navy thought Polaris would down grade the rest of the service and reluctantly took on the task of developing a nuclear polaris submarine.⁴³ However, the project was undertaken and has met with considerable success. The program is on schedule and deployment of the first operational submarine is expected in mid-1968. The submarines will have the capability of accepting the fourth generation Poseidon when it becomes available.

The submarines are a combination of American and British technique and tradition, and are not simply carbon copies of the U. S. model. The warheads to be used will be British although they will be carried on American missiles.⁴⁴

⁴²Snyder, op. cit. supra note 11, pp. 24-32, 151-204; Moulton, op. cit. supra note 33, pp. 57-77.

⁴³Snyder, op. cit. supra note 11, pp. 128-129.

⁴⁴Robert Lindsey, "U.K. Polaris Program on Schedule," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, October 1965, pp. 154-158.

The program has not been entirely without its problems, however. Some have been serious and may well delay the operational target date for the program. H.M.S. Dreadnought is a non-polaris atomic submarine which was to provide operational experience for nuclear crews. She has been recently withdrawn from service because of dangerous metal failures. A series of hair-line fractures have developed in welds in the hull. The program for the four polaris submarines will probably be delayed.⁴⁵

The polaris program has had other problems, at least one of which has been resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. The New York Times reported on August 22, 1965, that a six-week labor dispute which affected the Vickers yard constructing the polaris submarines had been settled. The dispute involved twelve skilled workers who had been prohibited from making tea during work hours. Vice Admiral Hugh Stirling Mackenzie, British Polaris program executive, is reported to have expressed satisfaction that the work schedule would be resumed.

By 1968, if the program succeeds, Britain will have a modern nuclear deterrent. But it will be completely dependent on the United States for this deterrent. The

⁴⁵"Notebook," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, December, 1965, p. 169.

Labor Government has already offered to turn this force over to NATO. Britain, for economic reasons in the main, has lost any hope of a position of even relative equality in the nuclear race.

The Conservative and Labor Governments of the past twenty years have supported NATO and, indeed, there has been some feeling among the U. S. military that the British contribution was the only one that could really be counted on. But a permanent military commitment within the framework of a multilateral alliance is still un-British, and there is occasionally a suggestion of reducing NATO contribution. The reason for reduction is, however, not that the principle of interdependence is wrong, but that the economy cannot take the strain. In 1957, the British Army of the Rhine was reduced from eighty thousand to about fifty-five thousand men, and it has remained at that figure ever since. It now appears that further reductions may occur. The Labor defense chief has argued that present strategic concepts are based on the no longer valid idea that a nuclear conflict would last for several months. He argues that the possibility of nuclear war has diminished and the forces committed to NATO in Germany could be used elsewhere.⁴⁶

⁴⁶"Britain Shies at Cost of Policing the World," Business Week, March 13, 1965, pp. 32-34.

This argument is in the nature of a rationalization since the real and obvious reason for reducing the NATO commitment is economic. The British overseas defense cost makes up half of the balance of payment deficit;⁴⁷ the British have worked hard to get Germany to absorb some of the cost of the B.O.A.R. In past years, the Germans have made "offset" purchases which have helped considerably. For 1964-1966, the amount of these purchases decreased, and Wilson has been forced to consider seriously reduction of the Rhine Army.⁴⁸ The British defense budget is, relative to G.N.P., the largest in Europe and is exceeded only by the United States. There have been recent attempts at McNamara style economies but real savings can come only from manpower cuts. In view of the intent of the Government to reduce the defense budget to 6 per cent of the G.N.P., the reduction of NATO forces seems inevitable.

It seems clear that Britain has not found satisfactory solutions to the defense problems it has faced in this second decade since the war. The reasons are basically economic, and the non-British observer can find room for criticism. The United States spends almost half of its tax dollar for defense, whereas the British spend about one

⁴⁷ News item in The New York Times, August 5, 1965.

⁴⁸ Supra note 46, p. 66.

quarter. The percentage of G.N.P. is not as significantly different, but the United States is still higher. It is obvious that a greater percentage is spent on "socialism" in Britain, and an American can argue that some of this should be diverted to defense.

Britain is going into its defense reductions with open eyes, and a reduced voice in world affairs may be a willingly-accepted consequence. Moulton argues that public opinion is the final arbiter of defense policy; and, if this be the case, the British are willing to accept the consequences of reduction in defense. Perhaps, the reduction can somehow be reconciled with closer ties to Europe. Only time will explain where Britain will go from here.

All of this has meaning for the United States. In an article in The New Republic,⁴⁹ Stephen Hugh-Jones discusses the "grand Anglo-American strategy that stretches from Kenya to California." He points out that the United States has responsibility in northeast and continental southeast Asia, plus the Pacific, which the British have had responsibility for Malaysia, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and East Africa. And the British have held up their end of things in an admirable fashion. From the Suez crisis

⁴⁹Stephen Hugh-Jones, "How Much Can Britain Defend?," The New Republic, August 21, 1965, pp. 11-12.



until this past year, the United States was permanently represented in the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf area by a small sea plane tender with accompanying destroyers. A British withdrawal from the East of Suez position would leave a power vacuum, and we would have to fill it. The British nuclear umbrella (V bombers based in Malaysia) protects the sub-continent and, as recently as a year ago, India's Prime Minister Shastri accepted reassurances of this continuing protection. Withdrawal from the area or obsolescence of the British nuclear strategic force will leave a void to be filled by the United States.

Far too little has the United States realized the British contribution in the Far and Middle East. The defense problems facing Britain today will be our problems tomorrow unless some satisfactory solutions can be worked out. As Churchill said of another period of high defense expenditures--"Of course we shall do it in the end?" But, at what cost? It is evident that the United States is making some preparation to fill the vacuum when and if it occurs. The new Indian Ocean base at Diego Garcia will be a joint U. S.-British effort. The important defense problems facing the United States today are closely connected with British problems, and the United States must be ready with a solution.

CHAPTER IV

NEW OR TRADITIONAL?

A recent book review in The New York Times contains a paragraph which might provide an answer to the question as to whether the 1966 Defense White Paper sets out a new or traditional defense policy for Britain. "There were more men in the Royal Navy at that date [the summer of 1797] than there are today, though the population was only a sixth of its present size."¹ One thing is clear: the British defense establishment in 1966 is far smaller than it has been in the past. However, that fact provides only a partial answer to the question of whether the present policy is a departure from the traditional. It may be possible to implement traditional policy with fewer men and less equipment. Size, then, is not necessarily an accurate indicator of a change in policy. The only fair way to answer the question as to whether the 1966 Defense White Paper sets out a new policy is to isolate those traditional elements found in Britain's defense planning and to test the White Paper against them.

¹Christopher Lloyd, "Jack Tar in Revolt," The New York Times Book Review, November 14, 1965, pp. 16 and 18.



I. THE TRADITIONAL

Defense

It is obvious that British defense policy today has as its primary aim the "defence of the Kingdom." This has been the aim of the policy created by British defense planners for the last two centuries. It is perhaps an oversimplification to state that British defense planning has been defensive and not aggressive in nature, but such has been and is the case. Long before the United States Defense Department was created, the term "Defence" appeared in British titles relating to military and naval matters. In the period between World War I and World War II, the Committee on Imperial Defence provided high-level policy decisions and, during World War II, the Prime Minister took for himself the title of Defense Minister. This is not to say that British military planners cut out for themselves a completely defensive role. Indeed, there were times when defense required plans to attack, and the old saw--the best defense is a good offense--found its place in British military thinking. That having been said, however, a traditional element of British military planning is defense and not aggression and that element is clearly present in the 1966 White Paper.

Overseas Responsibility

British defense policy traditionally not only provided for the "defence of the Kingdom" but also took into consideration the defense of the Sovereign's "territories and dominions beyond the Seas." It has been noted that, during the inter-war period, the subject of imperial defense was one of the most important aspects of British defense thinking. The Royal Navy was responsible for keeping open the lines of communications, and the Army had the duty of acting as the imperial police force. In the period immediately after World War II, this element of British defense policy still played an important part in defense planning. The 1946 Defense White Paper still listed as a task of the defense establishment the "maintenance of internal security and settled conditions throughout the Empire."² In the middle 'fifties, the air-lifted central strategic reserve was developed to fill the need once filled by the chain of bases and deployed battalions of the Cardwell System. The recent experiences in Aden clearly demonstrate that the responsibilities of the imperial police force still exist, and the White Paper itself contains language such as "the

²"Statement Relating to Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmd. 6743 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), p. 5. See also Chapter III, supra, pp. 45-47.



garrison, airfield, naval dockyard and other establishments will continue to be maintained."³

It states the obvious to observe that the conditions under which "imperial defence" now operates are much different than those existing in the decade of the 'twenties or even the late 'forties and early 'fifties. Nevertheless, the traditional element of imperial defense, which has historically been a part of British defense planning, is present today. The scope of responsibility has lessened as the Empire has contracted; the means of exercising the responsibility has changed as modern weaponry has evolved. But the fact of responsibility remains, and imperial defense exists as a traditional element in the 1966 Defense White Paper.⁴

³"Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1966, Part I. The Defence Review," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 2901 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 8.

⁴There are many examples of the deployment of British forces in recent years in the exercise of imperial police duties. In our own hemisphere, Royal Marines and the Welsh Fusilliers saw recent duty in Georgetown, then British Guiana. Aden, Singapore and Hong Kong provide other examples. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the modern day imperial defense function can be found in the deployment of a Royal Marine Commando to East Africa in 1964. After Kenya had become independent, an internal Army revolt threatened the new government. The British were requested as a Commonwealth partner to send forces to put down the internal disturbances. A Commando was air-lifted in and the revolt was terminated. This action was in exercise of the imperial police function. More interestingly, however, it is a comment on the faith which the new Kenya Government was willing to put in the British. After a long and sometimes bloody struggle Kenya received independence. Within a year after



Equipment

It has been a traditional, if sometimes obliquely expressed, aspect of British defense policy that the Forces should have available the newest and best weaponry obtainable. This is an ancient tradition which goes back to the time when the sides of ships were first pierced to make the broadside a possibility. That action made obsolete the Spanish mounted guns which could be used only on the fore-castle and poop of a man of war. During this century, the introduction of the tank and the airplane into the Imperial Arsenal demonstrates the continuation of the tradition. British contributions to the field of carrier aviation and the development of radar and asdic are also in this tradition. Within the last two decades the amphibious assault ship--the commando carrier--combined the American expertise in amphibious warfare with the concept of vertical envelopment.

that independence was granted, the "colonial master" was invited to return with an armed force to destroy the armed forces of the new nation. There was complete faith that the "colonial master" would leave as soon as the job was done, and full independence would not suffer. Of course, the Royal Marines did leave when the revolt was terminated. One wonders--at least this writer does--if the French would be invited to return in force to Algeria to put down an Army revolt. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the remaining mystic of the Commonwealth. However, this kind of faith in the British by the ex-colony shows that in some small way the British must have done something right.

It is arguable that the British involvement with nuclear power and nuclear weapons is a modern manifestation of this ancient tradition. It is impossible to point to historical examples, and thereby establish the traditional aspects, of the use of atomic power if one treats atomic power as an item sui generis. However, viewed as a development in the field of weaponry, one finds that the 1966 White Paper carries on a traditional aspect of British defense policy.

It has been earlier observed that the British participated in the development of the atomic bomb in World War II. The value of atomic power for use as a weapon and as a source of power for propulsion and for light and heat was not lost on the British. The cost of development was tremendous, however, and cooperation with the United States was viewed as a means of providing the new weapon at a bearable cost. Cost and the awesome power of the atom itself led to "interdependence" with the United States.

In 1958, the Defense White Paper acknowledged this interdependence. "Today no country can hope to gain anything by war."⁵ Interdependence and collective security were twin props in defense planning. Britain had her

⁵"Report of Defence, Britain's Contribution to Peace and Security," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 363 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958), p. 2.

nuclear deterrent, but "it cannot be compared in magnitude to that of the United States."⁶ In matters relating to the development of intermediate-range ballistic missiles, ballistic rockets and nuclear submarines progress was being made with the cooperation of the United States. However, the White Paper made it clear that these developments were intended to provide British arms which would be used as part of a collective effort. After all, there was still a feeling in Great Britain that the United States, although far and away the most powerful member of the alliance, had learned and still could learn from the British how worldwide military and naval strength could be used.⁷ Britain's partnership with the United States in the weapons field set her apart from any other nation. The McMahon Act amendments had favored Britain and, in 1958, Britain could with justification look down on the rest of Europe from her position in the nuclear club.⁸ There was some sort of a special relationship between Great Britain and the United States, and the British felt that it was a good thing. The relationship was difficult to defend, but it was there.⁹

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ See generally, N. H. Gibbs, The Origins of Imperial Defence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 23-24.

⁸ Coral Bell, The Debatable Alliance (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 56-66.

⁹ Herbert Nicholas, Britain and the U.S.A. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 166-180.

The 1960 Defense White Paper¹⁰ could claim that Britain had a flexible defense establishment which could meet challenges anywhere in the world. Wider cooperation in defense research was urged with the United States, but the White Paper could claim progress with an "All-British" nuclear submarine and with guided missiles.

But 1960 also marked the turning point in Britain's participation in the development of a guided missile arsenal. Britain had realized in the 1950's that the manned bomber was not going to last forever as the ultimate weapon, and development was started on a follow-on delivery system. Blue Streak was to be a liquid fuel missile designed for launching from a hard site. The 1958 Defense White Paper had claimed progress in the development of such a missile.¹¹ The missile was to have a range between that of the U. S. intermediate- and intercontinental-range missiles. At the same time, a "stand off" weapon, Blue Steel, was under development. This weapon would be carried by long-range bombers, but it could be fired at a considerable distance from target and would, hence, extend both the range and life

¹⁰"Report on Defence," Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 952 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960).

¹¹Cmnd. 363, p. 6.



of the bomber fleet.¹² Both of these weapons were responsive to the demands of the new generation of weaponry and, although not on a scale with American or Russian developments, could assure Britain a significant voice in world affairs.

But Blue Streak--the liquid fuel hard site missile--had to be canceled in 1960. There were two main reasons for this decision: first, the cost was too high; second, there was a good and relatively cheap alternative available. There was a third reason of lesser importance and that is technical in nature. A liquid fuel missile is a more vulnerable thing than a solid fuel missile, and this fact was recognized by the British. However, the evidence seems clear that cost was the main reason for cancellation of the project.¹³ The British had invested over 100 million pounds in the missile, and the estimates of completion cost went as high as 600 million. This was simply too much for the British economy to bear. The Conservative Government had tried to provide Britain with a genuinely independent nuclear deterrent; it failed because of cost. As Harold

¹²William P. Snyder, The Politics of British Defense Policy, 1945-1962 (n.p.: Ohio State University Press, 1964), pp. 24-33.

¹³Harold Wilson, Purpose in Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964), pp. 165-179; Snyder, op. cit. supra note 12, p. 28.

Wilson pointed out to the House of Commons at that time--the investment in Blue Streak would have paid for housing subsidies for twenty years.¹⁴ Full development of the missile might have paid for one hundred years of subsidies, and no British Government was going to stay in office with that kind of a defense policy.

At the same time of cancellation, the United States developed Skybolt which was to replace the Blue Streak. Skybolt was not unlike Blue Steel, but it has a greater range--up to one thousand miles. With the range of the Victor bombers extended by the one thousand miles, the Skybolt missile was not a bad second choice.

Before proceeding to the Skybolt cancellation and the Nassau agreement, it would be well to evaluate the meaning of the Blue Streak affair. The development of Blue Streak represents a forthright attempt by the British to provide a modern up-to-date weapon which would be responsive to the demands of modern war technology and which would provide the greatest amount of protection--in a deterrent sense--consistent with the available resources of the nation. Blue Streak failed on an economic basis; the cost was simply too high. The original plans to develop the weapon were consistent with the traditional policy of providing the Forces

¹⁵Wilson, op. cit. supra note 13, p. 178.

with modern weaponry. The decision to cancel Blue Streak was not inconsistent with this tradition because there was an alternative weapon available--Skybolt--which apparently could have provided a similar protection at a more acceptable cost.

There is another aspect of the Blue Streak affair and the subsequent Skybolt cancellation which makes it significant in a discussion of British defense policy. That, of course, is the aspect of increased dependence on the United States. More of that later, since it is part of the "new" approach to defense planning found in the 1966 White Paper.

The discussions concerning dependence on the United States, which followed the publication of the 1966 Defense White Paper, overshadowed those aspects of the White Paper which evidence the continuation of the traditional policy of providing modern up-to-date weapons for the armed forces. This policy with respect to weaponry is stated in the White Paper in the following language:

Our forces must always possess enough of the arms and equipment required for the day-to-day tasks of peace-keeping throughout the world: it is also essential that they should have some advanced weapons which can deter potential enemies from raising the level of a local conflict to a degree which might threaten world peace. We are determined to maintain a proper balance of capability in both these fields.¹⁵

¹⁵Cmnd. 2901, p. 9. (Underscoring this author's.)

The White Paper indicated that there would be further expansion of the Polaris program and that new aircraft--the F111A would be obtained. Regardless of the fact that these two weapon systems would increase dependence on the United States, it must be admitted that they will bring the most advanced kind of equipment into the British war chest.

The White Paper also announced the introduction of a new guided missile ship into the fleet.¹⁶ The Type 82 Guided Missile destroyers will be about 5,650 tons and will be slightly larger than the present County Class destroyers. Their design has been centered on a powerful new weapons system. They will be fully stabilized to provide a steady platform and will have a hull which will permit sea-keeping and high speeds in all weather.

The ships will be fitted with the latest in equipment. There will be an Action Data Automation weapons system to compute information for a new radar set up. The radar has been developed by the British in cooperation with the Royal Netherlands Navy.¹⁷

The ship will have surface to air/surface to surface

¹⁶ Cmnd. 2901, p. 9.

¹⁷ British Information Service News Release, February 24, 1966. British Information Services, New York.

missile--the Seadart--and an anti-submarine weapon system--the Ikara.¹⁸

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the new class ships in terms of providing the Navy with modern equipment is found in its propulsion system. A combination of steam and gas turbine will be used. The machinery will be operated remotely from a ship control center and will include an automatic steering capability.¹⁹ Development of this new propulsion system will result in a significant savings in weight and space of machinery and fuel.²⁰ The United States Navy is vitally interested in this propulsion system, and cannot, at this point in time, lay claim to anything as advanced as the new British system. It seems clear then that the 1966 White Paper carries on the traditional aspect of British defense policy by which the British fighting man has access to the newest weapon and equipment.

International Organizations and Disarmament

Recent history underlies the importance to Britain, as to all other countries, of strengthening the United Nations as the main instrument for keeping peace the only certain solution would be an

¹⁸Ibid.; see also Cmnd. 2909, p. 9.

¹⁹British Information Service News Release, supra note 17, p. 81.

²⁰See generally, "British to Have All Gas Turbine Frigate," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, June, 1966, p. 167.

international agreement to control both the production and supply of armaments. This, too, remains a major aim of British policy.²¹

The above quotation states the British position with respect to the United Nations and disarmament as found in the 1966 White Paper. Deletion of the words "United Nations" and insertion of the words "League of Nations" would make the statement an accurate representation of the expressed policy in the middle 'thirties.²² However, British defense planners are realistic men, and the policy statements in support of the international organizations and disarmament always conclude with a caveat that, since neither vehicle has been able to insure lasting peace, the nation must make provision for its own defense.

In the 'thirties, Britain experimented with unilateral disarmament, and it found the experiment a costly one. There is no evidence to suggest that current planning envisions such an experiment again. However, there is a group of British thinkers who have been leaders in the disarmament field, and some of these men have been very close to, if not in, policy-making positions in the British Government. Writers in the field of Deterrence and

²¹ Cmnd. 2901, p. 4.

²² See Chapter I, note 16 supra, p. 8, for a comparison of the language used in the 1935 and 1966 Defense White Papers.

Disarmament can be categorized in various ways. One convenient method of consideration provides for a three-way breakdown: Peace Movement Disarmers, Deterrence and Defense, and Anti-Communist Armers.²³ The first group--Peace Movement Disarmers--is made up of individuals with widely-differing views, but there is general agreement that nuclear weapons must be destroyed. Included among the nuclear pacifists in this group are Lord Russell and C. P. Snow. Men such as Russell and Snow certainly have a more direct effect on policy-making in a Labor Government than their ideological brothers--Pauling, for example--have on policy making in a Democratic Administration in the United States. Russell is convinced that the risks of unilateral disarmament are less than the risks of nuclear war. Snow has argued that a nuclear destruction of the world is a certainty unless nuclear disarmament comes about.²⁴ The official efforts of Lord Cardigan and Lord Chalfont demonstrate that there is some official acceptance of these positions in the Labor Government's approach to disarmament.

It seems clear that declared support of international organizations and disarmament is a traditional aspect of

²³William R. Van Cleave, "The Nuclear Weapons Debate," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May, 1966, pp. 26-38.

²⁴Ibid., p. 31.

British defense planning. It is also clear that there are times when this support is more of form than of substance. However, it is probably true that there is a more genuine feeling for unilateral disarmament in official circles in Britain than in the United States and that the present expression of support for disarmament in the White Paper goes further than is immediately apparent.

II. THE NEW

It has almost been a "Hornbook" rule that a discussion of traditional British defense policy and, indeed, even foreign policy, should begin with the proposition that Britain stayed out of alliances. For at least 150 years, this proposition held water, and the balance of power system operated on the basis of Britain's providing the "swingman." During the inter-war period, Britain tried to return to its non-European orientation just as the United States tried to return to its policy of avoiding "entangling foreign alliances." World War II taught both countries many lessons, and high on the list of lessons learned was the value of alliances. British defense policy in the post-World War II era was definitely pro-alliance and with varying degrees of effectiveness NATO, SEATO, and CENTO replaced the independent maritime strategy of past British policy.

The 1966 White Paper declares continued support for NATO, but there is an indication that changes are forthcoming. This is not to say that Britain will disassociate herself with the alliances that were set up in the decade of the 'fifties. But it is clear that those alliances have changed and that defense policy will change with them.

Twenty years of alliances have led to "interdependence" and that "interdependence" has provided a new aspect of defense policy. Interdependence is not a new item in the 1966 White Paper; it has been present before. The 1966 White Paper may face it a bit more honestly than past White Papers have done.

There are two events in recent history which have demonstrated that acknowledgment of interdependence must be treated as a significant aspect of British defense planning. The first was Suez; the second was Skybolt. Suez demonstrated that action independent of the United States or the Soviet Union was simply no longer possible. Skybolt demonstrated that interdependence has become dependence on the United States.

The Blue Streak affair has been discussed above, and it has been observed that its development was an attempt to provide a modern up-to-date weapon which would be responsive to the requirements of modern weaponry. It is generally agreed that its cancellation marked the end of the British

attempt to maintain a genuinely independent means of delivering a nuclear weapon.²⁵ The decision not to go forward with the Blue Streak missile was made by the British themselves and did not represent the result of U. S. pressure. The Suez Crisis had demonstrated that their capability for truly-independent action was severely restricted. Blue Streak was proposed in the aftermath of Suez in part to demonstrate that the British still could act with a significant degree of independence notwithstanding Suez. Then, primarily for reasons of cost and the domestic political consequences of a policy of massive defense expenditure, the independent delivery system was abandoned.

The United States offered the British Skybolt as an alternative. At the time, there was no clear understanding as to the British financial participation in its development.²⁶ By 1962, the Kennedy Administration decided Skybolt was not worth producing and announced its cancellation in a somewhat cavalier fashion. The British reacted violently, and President Kennedy was genuinely surprised at the crisis

²⁵ See generally, Wilson, op. cit. supra note 13, pp. 24-33; see also James L. Moulton, Defence in a Changing World (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964), pp. 57-77.

²⁶ Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 564. This conclusion is supported by the record of debate in the House of Commons at the time of the Blue Streak cancellation. See generally, Wilson, op. cit. supra note 13, pp. 165-179.

which the cancellation caused.²⁷ A major rift in Anglo-American relations was possible, and the Macmillan Government was put in jeopardy. The Nassau conference attempted to save the situation; Kennedy offered to continue the development of Skybolt if the British would pick up half the cost. The British Prime Minister would not accept the proposition.²⁸ The Prime Minister was in an awkward position and the future of the Conservative Government probably rested on the results of the Nassau conference. Polaris was the obvious alternative, and an offer was made of Polaris to the British. The Nassau conference concluded with a joint communique which was sufficiently unclear to meet both U. S. and British requirements. The communique indicated that the provision of the missiles was with the understanding that they would be part of the development of a multilateral NATO nuclear force. However, the British made it clear that they would be used for the purposes of international defense of the Western alliance "except where Her Majesty's Government may decide that supreme national interests were at stake."²⁹ The multilateral nature of the offer was directed at the

²⁷ Sorensen, op. cit. supra note 26, pp. 564-576.

²⁸ Francis Boyd, British Politics in Transition, 1945-63 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 183-184.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 184.

other NATO allies--particularly the French--and was designed to counter charges of pro-British discrimination. The British were free to interpret the communique as giving them independent control when they decided the situation demanded it.

The Skybolt/Polaris controversy was the final act in the drama of independence, interdependence, and dependence on the United States. The basic decision had been made when Blue Streak was canceled. Britain's deterrent was no longer independent but was dependent on the United States. The British--or many of them--did not see it that way.³⁰ The Nassau agreement was presented by the Government as a "guarantee of independence of the British nuclear deterrent for an indefinite time ahead."³¹ The Opposition and the Europeans could argue that it made the British nuclear capability forever dependent on the United States.³²

At the time, Harold Wilson saw the issues presented by the Nassau agreement in broader terms. However, his speech in Commons on January 31, 1963, was made two weeks

³⁰ See, for example, Bell, op. cit. supra note 8, pp. 78-79.

³¹ Kenneth Younger, Changing Perspectives in British Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 41.

³² Ibid.

before he became Labor leader, and he admitted that it did not represent entirely the Labor position. He indicated that the Nassau agreement and the debate it caused raised three major questions: First, was the exchange of Polaris for Skybolt a proper move? Second, could Britain maintain an independent nuclear deterrent? Third, if not, what should defense priorities be? He argues that independence died with Blue Streak and, from that point in time onward, any discussion of it was an illusion. Britain should forget about the non-existing independence and put her defense into NATO and other "conventional" commitments.³³

³³Wilson, op. cit. supra note 13, pp. 194-207.

CHAPTER V

A CONCLUSION

It will not surprise the reader to discover that there is no clear answer to the question originally used in this thesis, to wit: Does the 1966 Defense White Paper set forth a new or a traditional defense policy for Great Britain? On one hand, the White Paper incorporates much that is traditional in British defense planning. On the other, it contains "new" elements--not necessarily new in the sense that 1966 provided the first indication of their existence, but "new" in the sense that they have never before been so honestly presented or so vigorously discussed.

The traditional elements are important and, indeed, provide the basis for most of the current defense policy. Perhaps the most important traditional element is that of imperial defense. It is probably improper to call it that today--fulfillment of overseas responsibility is the more modern term. The White Paper makes it clear that there will be maintained a military presence East of Suez. The "Thin Red Line" is thinner than it has been in the past, but it is there. There may be a fallback from Aden to another base in the Persian Gulf area; there may be a withdrawal from Singapore to Australia if necessary. But Britain still

will be represented in the Middle East, Indian Ocean, and Malay Peninsula.

British armed forces will be furnished with the best weapons obtainable to do their job. Dependence on the United States notwithstanding, they will have Polaris and the F111A. The Royal Navy will have a guided missile ship with a conventional propulsion system superior to any ship in the world.

The Commando carriers and the air-lifted strategic reserve will still respond to calls for assistance from fellow Commonwealth members in East Africa and the Malay Peninsula, and the South Atlantic squadron will still be available to respond to a disturbance in the Falkland Islands when the situation demands. As the system of alliances which grew out of World War II modifies itself with the changing times, the British will be present to carry their share of responsibilities.

All of the tradition aspects of defense policy, however, will be governed by controls which are, in the long view, new to British defense planning. The control is basically one of cost, and cost, more than anything else, has created an increased dependence on the United States. For the first time in recent history, Britain has acknowledged that cost will determine the mission of its defense establishment. No longer will the policy makers set forth

tasks to be accomplished and then determine the resources required to accomplish them. From here on out, the tasks will be a function of a fixed monetary figure. If the 1966 White Paper has a genuinely new element in it, this is it. The whole argument about dependence on the United States flows from this. This fixed cost of defense simply will not permit the independent development of a nuclear delivery system, so Polaris will be used. The fixed cost will not permit independent development of either a new generation of Victor bombers or Canberra aircraft so the United States will furnish F111A and C130 aircraft. Cost will not permit the development of a new carrier force, so there will be none.

This is the new aspect of British defense planning which the 1966 White Paper proclaims. The White Paper states this basic policy decision and the reason for it. "Military strength is of little value if it is achieved at the expense of economic health We plan, therefore, to bring our defense expenditure down" ¹

This policy is the creation of Harold Wilson, and it does not necessarily represent a consensus within the Labor Party. During the debate on the White Paper, it took relatively objective Liberal Party to point this out. ² The

¹Cmnd. 2901, p. 1.

²Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Official Report, 5th Series, Vol. 725, Cols. 1829-1835.

Liberal defense spokesman, Mr. Emlyn Hooson, used the Labor Party's 1964 defense position paper as his touch stone, and he demonstrated in instance after instance where the White Paper differed from the party's policy. The maintenance of a nuclear deterrent, the assignment of the V bombers to other than NATO responsibilities, the continuation of Polaris, the continued improvement of conventional equipment--all these were cited as violations of Labor's 1964 defense manifesto, as indeed they were. The responsibility for the 1966 policy and its inconsistencies with approved party policy were laid at Wilson's feet. "There is no sphere in which the Labour Party has broken as many promises as in defence."³

Harold Wilson recognized that, for Britain, cost of defense must determine policy long before the 1966 White Paper was issued. He further realized that independence was a function of cost and, therefore, that independence was gone. For him, Suez decided the issue of independence in the conventional field and Blue Streak in the nuclear. He also considered the argument that a limited degree of independence must be maintained in order that the British could act as a restraining influence on the United States. Cuba answered that argument since it was clear that the

³Ibid., Col. 1830.

United States would act without consultation when there was a clear threat to her security.⁴

For reasons of cost, Harold Wilson has deliberately put his nation in a position of further dependence on the United States. By 1970, every major weapon used by the British armed forces will be an American product. In the nuclear field, these weapons will have British warheads, but the delivery vehicles will be American. British forces will remain East of Suez and the NATO contribution will be maintained in Germany as long as Wilson's fixed cost philosophy permits. Cooperation with the United States in the Indian Ocean at Diego-Garcia will permit reduction of the cost in that area.

For Harold Wilson, the 1966 Defense White Paper does not establish a new defense policy for the United Kingdom. It does set forth the policy in a manner which has never been used before. Defense policies will, henceforth, be determined on the basis of a fixed cost; within that limitation, Britain will exercise her responsibility to the fullest.

In the past, Wilson has said: We believe that a nation's greatness depends not on prestige military policies,

⁴Harold Wilson, Purpose in Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964), pp. 194-207; see also John Manden, Great Britain or Little England? (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964), pp. 9-20.

but on the influence we have exerted in the forum of world opinion."⁵ The defense policy announced in the 1966 White Paper will give him an opportunity to test that belief.

⁵Wilson, op. cit. supra note 13, p. 207.

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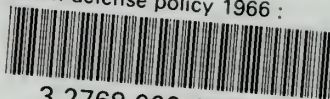
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